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HOMER'S ILIAD

(BOOKS I., VI., XXII., XXIV.)

TRANSLATED BY

ALEXANDER POPE

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HOMER'S ILIAD.

W. P. I

INTRODUCTION.

Of Homer, the author of the "Iliad," we have little exact knowledge. We know that he was a Greek and a native of the country bordering the eastern part of the Mediterranean; and we may calculate that he lived in the ninth century before Christ.

He may have been blind; but his blindness must have come upon him late in life, after he had become familiar with the mountains and forests and rivers and sky of which he sings; and the sea, which he never mentions without some description of its color, its motion, its vastness, its beauty, or its usefulness.

After his death, when his fame had become established, many cities claimed his birthplace and home. The rhyme of an old couplet from the Greek bears witness to this:

> "Seven rival towns contend for Homer dead,
> Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

His fellow-countrymen the Greeks, in whose language he sang his songs, called him Homeros. They were a people who loved poetry and beauty more than any race which has been on the earth since their time. Their country nurtured such tastes as these. It had the bluest and most beautiful sky and the clearest air, and through the air the sunbeams sparkled and danced over hill and stream and olive grove, and over the broad sea, too, which penetrated the land in a thousand bays and gulfs.

The habits and manners and faiths of that folk and of those

times of Homer, far back in the early morning of history, we must not suppose like the manners and thoughts of to-day. They were far different and far simpler.

In general social divisions we find among them two different classes. First there were the chiefs or kings. They ruled by reason of their supposed descent from a god, and also by their superior strength and bravery, riches and beauty. They were the fathers of the people like the patriarchs of the Old Testament. They were majestic and great. Their strength was as the strength of ten of later-born men because of their divine origin. Of such men Homer sang. As soon as they ceased to be able by their real value and manhood to assert their individual authority, they lost their kingship.

At home these chieftains lived in strong houses or palaces. About them were grouped the people in simple huts or cottages. They were the second of the two classes named above. The cottagers were commonly in the service of the chief or king under whose protection they lived and for whom they bore arms in battle. Besides giving his protection the chief probably led them in the chase, and purchased, by some process of exchange, the produce of their flocks and harvests. But of these masses we hear little. You will see in the poem that they are the vague, dark background which throws out the shining forms of heroes and gods in the broad and beautiful pictures of the "Iliad."

But Homer was a rhapsodist, as poets were then called. In thinking of that ancient time we must not suppose that Homer stood quite alone and sang to a songless race. The Greeks were a poetic, imaginative people, and there were many rhapsodists among them even in the early time of Homer. Our poet, in truth, was born towards the end of a long period in which many

others had composed epic or heroic songs. But he alone has survived to us. His is the first Greek voice coming down from the long period of stirring human life before history was written.

Like all the poets of his day he sang songs about heroes who had lived generations before him. Stories of their deeds had been preserved,—not by writing as later they might have been, but by word of mouth. For writing was not then commonly known. Songs and stories were in Homer's time handed down from father and mother to son and daughter, and also from rhapsodist to rhapsodist, by their having learned by heart the one from the other.

The songs and legends of the people Homer took up and clothed in beautiful rhythmical language—language so beautiful and of such fine simplicity that the epic poetry he composed has never been surpassed. The Greek in which he wrote was the speech of his day just as the pictures of life in the "Iliad" must be pictures of the habits and manners of the world in which he lived. For Homer sang of things which he saw.

Poetry was the literature, and in great measure the music, of that day. It was carried to the chieftain's house or palace by the poets or rhapsodists. The poet might dwell in the house of a chief, or he might go from the house of one king to that of another. In festivals, also, where the Greeks met in honor of some god or hero, the rhapsodist chanted his lays before the multitude, singing in a monotone and enlivening his song with touches now and then upon a four-stringed harp. By such recitations poets gave out their works and passed them on to other poets or rhapsodists.

"Homer," says Pope, "was no sooner come from his obscurity, but Greece received him with delight and profit." His songs,

which in the beginning passed for fine poetry, came to the later Greeks to be history, geography, and the sciences. The rites they named were quoted for the conduct of life. By their usages, questions referring to the laws between nations were settled. Singers of later Greece went to these songs for their inspiration also, and critics for their rules. Philosophers quoted them in defense of their opinions. The books written upon Homer swelled to libraries. Warriors modeled their lives by his heroes. The "Iliad" and "Odyssey" were, in short, the Bible of the Greeks, and had all the reverence and regard with which its sacred books are held by a people.

Moreover, Homer preserved to the later Greek world the early ideas of gods and goddesses. "He fixed," said the Greek historian Herodotus in after time, "the genealogies of the gods." In fact the gods and goddesses play such an important part in Homer's writings that we cannot properly appreciate his works without understanding something of the attributes with which the childlike Greeks endowed their divinities. The paragraphs immediately following will explain most of the allusions to the gods found in these four books of the "Iliad."

Far back in the very beginning of their race, in their total ignorance of causes the Greeks wondered at everything. Certain forces of nature and certain spiritual powers of man seemed so strange and inexplicable to them that they said "Some god or spirit is in this thing." Forthwith, having thus conceived it, they gave the inexplicable a name, and it was to them divine,—a god or goddess. "When thunder terrified them, they attributed their own nature to the phenomenon; and, being apt to express their most violent passions by howls and roarings, they conceived heaven as a vast body, which gave notice of its anger by light-

nings and thunderings." From such a beginning was formed the Greek mythology.

Now almost all races in all times have conceived their heaven, or abode of the gods, as some place high above them. So it was with the Greeks. They fancied that their gods dwelt on the top of Mt. Olympus, a lofty mountain in Thessaly which was the most northern state of Greece. The summit of this mountain was wrapped in clouds. The mystery of it touched their quick imagination, and they came to make this mountain top the doorway to the home of their divinities.

The chief of all the gods, and king of heaven, was Jupiter, the thunderer, called also Jove. Although the other gods submitted to his will, even his power was limited by a higher fate, or destiny.

Jupiter shared the kingdom of the world with his brothers Neptune, or Poseidon, and Pluto. Neptune was god of the sea and, with Nereus, Thetis, and the Nereids, personified the power of the sea. Pluto had the kingship of the lower world, or Hades.

Juno, or Hera, was wife of Jove and also his sister. But in spite of her exalted position her power was not greater than that of the other goddesses, for Jupiter was not inclined to follow his wife's inclinations in the favors he showed to gods and mortals.

Jove's daughter Minerva, Pallas, or Athene, who sprang full-grown and armed from her father's head, was the personification of wisdom and intelligence. She plays an important part in Homer's poems, appearing at most opportune times. But whenever the poet says that Pallas came to the aid of a hero, it is but another way — the early poetic way — of telling how this hero thought to do a wise and clever act.

Other daughters of Jupiter were Venus, the goddess of beauty, fabled to have risen from the foam of the sea, and Diana, or Artemis, goddess of the moon.

One of Jupiter's sons was the beautiful Apollo, or Phœbus, twin brother of Diana. He was god of the sun, of medicine, and of music and all fine arts. To the Greeks the sun was an archer and the sunbeams his arrows.

Other sons of Jove were Mars, or Ares, the god of war, Mercury, or Hermes, the messenger of the gods, Vulcan, or Hephæstus, the god of fire and the forge, and Bacchus, or Dionysus, god of wine and revelry.

The Greeks thought their gods like men; they endowed them with the attributes of men, and we must not therefore be surprised to see these gods display all passions common to men. As their divinities were conceived as actively interested in the affairs of mortals, the disputes and quarrels of the gods had a considerable influence on the fortunes of the men they favored. It was in fact a dispute among the goddesses which led to the Trojan War. Plainly told, the story is in this wise:

Among the guests present at the wedding of the sea nymph Thetis to Peleus, King of the Myrmidons, the goddess of discord left an apple marked "To the fairest." Juno, Minerva, and Venus all claimed the prize, but the gods, having in mind the resentment of the two who should lose, refused to judge between them. And so it happened that the decision was left to Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy. By promising gifts each of the three goddesses tempted Paris to make the award in her favor. Pallas promised wisdom, Juno, unlimited power; but Venus offered a most beautiful bride. With a man of Paris's taste the award could not but fall to Venus.

Not long after this Paris set out from Troy, the capital of the Kingdom of Phrygia, (which lay along the shores of the Hellespont, or Dardanelles, in Asia Minor,) where Priam was king and Hecuba, Paris's mother, was queen. He sailed to Greece and, once landed, went to Sparta, a chief town of the Peloponnesus, the peninsula which forms the southern half of Greece. Menelaus ruled over Sparta, and his wife Helen was famed as the most beautiful woman in the world. At their palace Paris enjoyed the honors of a guest for many days, but when kingly business called Menelaus away, Paris, relying on the promise of Venus to justify the act, abused his hospitality and carried Helen off to Troy. From this theft arose the famous war between the Greeks and Trojans known as the Trojan War.

Menelaus swore that he would avenge his wrong, and all the heroes of Greece, who upon Helen's marriage had bound themselves to defend her husband against aggressors, came to his aid. It is said that an army of 100,000 men was gathered. Agamemnon, son of Atreus and brother of Menelaus, was leader of the expedition, but the chief of the warriors was the lion-hearted Achilles, son of Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis. At his birth his mother had dipped him into the river Styx and made him invulnerable save in one spot,—the heel by which she held him. Among other heroes ranged with Achilles on the Greek side were Ulysses, famed for wisdom, the great Ajax, son of Telamon, second to the godlike Achilles in personal strength and fighting power, Diomedes, a mighty warrior, Patroclus, the beloved friend of Achilles, and the aged and wise king Nestor.

Chief among the Trojans were the brave Hector, son of Priam, King of Troy, and Æneas, the famous hero of Virgil's "Æneid." Venus favored the Trojans because of the award of

the apple which Paris had made, while Juno and Minerva were true to their resentment and gave their support to the Greeks.

For nine years the Greeks held Troy in siege. In the tenth, dissensions among themselves changed the fortunes of the war. It is this quarrel and its effects of which Homer sings in the "Iliad."

The fairest women taken captives of war in those days were awarded as prizes to the most meritorious heroes. And so it happened that Chryseis, captive from a town allied to the Trojans, had been given to Agamemnon, and Briseis, also a captive, to Achilles. When Chryses, father of Chryseis and priest of Apollo, heard that his child was in Agamemnon's hands, he hastened to the chief and offered ransom. But the king dismissed him with insult. Then Chryses prayed and Apollo heard his prayer and sent a plague upon the people. The seer Calchas declared the cause of the plague, and Agamemnon was obliged to release his prize, but demanding an equivalent, he took to himself Achilles's prize, Briseis.

Upon the surrender of Briseis, Achilles in anger withdrew himself and his men from the war and refused further aid. The fortune of the Greeks then wavered, and victory abandoned them. The Trojan warriors drove them back to their camps. Hector had already applied the torch to their ships when Achilles yielded to the prayer of Patroclus. He gave to his friend his armor and his chariot drawn by the immortal horses, Chestnut, Dapple, and Swiftfoot; and granted him to charge at the head of the Myrmidons. But Patroclus was slain by Hector. To avenge his death Achilles forgot his private wrongs. Returning to the army clad in new armor forged for him by Vulcan, he slew Hector, and dragged his body round the walls of Troy. The "Iliad" closes with the death and burial of Hector.

The wrath of Achilles against Agamemnon, and his love for Patroclus which finally led him to break his oath of withdrawal, form the subject of the "Iliad."

Other poems tell of the death of Achilles,—how after routing the Trojans he was slain by an arrow from the quiver of the unwarlike Paris. The Greeks carried off his body and prepared a magnificent funeral. But Thetis and the Nereids, saving the body from the funeral pile, conveyed it to immortal life and bliss in the island of Leuce in the Euxine.

The Achilles of the "Iliad" stood to the Greeks of all historic times as a most beautiful type of strength, of the courage which does its duty without questioning the end, and of the power and beauty of youth.

Ulysses now became leader of the Greeks. At his instigation they built a capacious, hollow, wooden horse so large that it held one hundred men. In this horse chosen heroes were concealed, and the Greek army, having burned their ships, sailed away. The infatuated Trojans drew the legacy within their walls. In the dead of night the Greeks rushed out and opened the gates to their returning comrades. It was in this wise that Troy was reduced to ashes, and its inhabitants to captivity.

Many translations of the famous "Iliad" have from time to time been made into English. Alexander Pope, the author of the version of which the following books are a part, was born in 1688.

About the time of his birth his father retired from London to a country place near Windsor. Here Pope's sickly childhood was passed. He was precocious, he said;

> "As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came."

At twelve Pope gave up school, settled at home, and read desultorily, following his fancies in composition. Soon he was writing pastorals and making acquaintances in chance visits to London. He knew Wycherley and Walsh, and once he laid an eager eye on the form of Dryden as the master sat in state at Will's Coffee House.

In 1715 he began his translation of Homer. After he had undertaken the work his friends, among whom was Swift, the author of "Gulliver's Travels," endeavored to procure him subscriptions. Pope was thirteen years making the translation and for it he received £8,000.

He produced a great work, but his "Iliad" is very different from Homer's "Iliad." Pope is not always true to the original. He is always strong and free in his translation; but he amplifies Homer and makes his song modern and complex; and now and then he interpolates a passage.

Homer wrote his poem in hexameter, or six-foot verse, the meter Longfellow used in "Evangeline." Pope chose for his translation the iambic of ten syllables,—the heroic couplet. In this couplet the lines rhyme in pairs, and each couplet completes the sense in itself.

After the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" Pope sent out from his villa at Twickenham the "Dunciad," his "Essay on Man," and "Epistles and Satires"; and there, having come to great fame and friendship with notable men and women of his time, finally, in 1744, he died.

THE ILIAD.

BOOK I.

THE CONTENTION OF ACHILLES AND AGAMEMNON.

THE ARGUMENT.

In the war of Troy, the Greeks, having sacked some of the neighboring towns, and taken from thence two beautiful captives, Chryseis and Briseis, allotted the first to Agamemnon, and the last to Achilles. Chryses, the father of Chryseis, and priest of Apollo, comes to the Grecian camp to ransom her; with which the action of the poem opens, in the tenth year of the siege. The priest, being refused and insolently dismissed by Agamemnon, entreats for vengeance from his god, who inflicts a pestilence on the Greeks. Achilles calls a council, and encourages Calchas, the priest, to declare the cause of it; who attributes it to the refusal of Chryseis. The king, being obliged to send back his captive, enters into a furious contest with Achilles, which Nestor pacifies; however, as he had the absolute command of the army, Agamemnon seizes on Briseis in revenge. Achilles in discontent withdraws himself and his forces from the rest of the Greeks; and complaining to his mother, Thetis, the sea goddess supplicates Jupiter to render them sensible of the wrong done to her son, by giving victory to the Trojans. Jupiter, granting her suit, incenses Juno; between whom the debate runs high, till they are reconciled by the address of Vulcan.

The time of two and twenty days is taken up in this book,—nine during the plague, one in the council and quarrel of the princes, and twelve for Jupiter's stay with the Ethiopians, at whose return Thetis prefers her petition. The scene lies in the Grecian camp, then changes to Chrysa, and lastly to Olympus.

ACHILLES' wrath,[1] to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly goddess,[2] sing!
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign[3]
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain;
Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore.

[1] See Introduction, pp. 10, 11.

[2] The muse or divinity who, according to early writers, inspired epic or heroic song.

[3] See Introduction, p. 7.

Since great Achilles and Atrides[1] strove,
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove![2]
Declare, O Muse! in what ill-fated hour
Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended power
Latona's son[3] a dire contagion spread,
And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead;
The king of men[4] his reverent priest defied,
And for the king's offense the people died.
For Chryses sought with costly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the victor's chain.
Suppliant the venerable father stands;
Apollo's awful ensigns[5] grace his hands;
By these he begs; and lowly bending down,
Extends the scepter and the laurel crown.
He sued to all, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother-kings[6] of Atreus' royal race:
"Ye kings and warriors! may your vows[7] be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground.
May Jove restore you when your toils are o'er
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.
But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseis to these arms again;
If mercy fail, yet let my presents move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, son of Jove."
The Greeks in shouts their joint assent declare,

[1] Son of Atreus; Agamemnon.

[2] See Introduction, p. 7.

[3] Phœbus, or Apollo, who personified the deadly power of the sun as well as the light and life of its rays. He was ruler of the day (see Introduction, p. 8).

[4] Agamemnon is commonly called "king of men" by Homer.

[5] Tufts of wool wound round a staff were in Greece the token of a suppliant. The scepter was the ensign of the priest's office, and the laurel was sacred to Apollo.

[6] Agamemnon and Menelaus.

[7] To gain Helen from Paris and return her to Menelaus.

The priest to reverence, and release the fair.
Not so Atrides; he, with kingly pride,
Repuls'd the sacred sire, and thus replied:
"Hence on thy life, and fly these hostile plains,
Nor ask, presumptuous, what the king detains.
Hence, with thy laurel crown, and golden rod;
Nor trust too far those ensigns of thy god.
Mine is thy daughter, priest, and shall remain;
And prayers, and tears, and bribes, shall plead in vain;
Till time shall rifle every youthful grace,
And age dismiss her from my cold embrace,
In daily labors of the loom employ'd,
Or doom'd to deck the bed she once enjoy'd.
Hence then; to Argos[1] shall the maid retire,
Far from her native soil and weeping sire."
The trembling priest along the shore return'd,
And in the anguish of a father mourn'd.
Disconsolate, not daring to complain,
Silent he wander'd by the sounding main;
Till, safe at distance, to his god he prays,
The god who darts around the world his rays:
"O Smintheus[2]! sprung from fair Latona's line,
Thou guardian power of Cilla[3] the divine,
Thou source of light! whom Tenedos[3] adores,
And whose bright presence gilds thy Chyrsa's[3] shores!
If e'er with wreaths I hung thy sacred fane,
Or fed the flames with fat of oxen slain;
God of the silver bow! thy shafts employ,
Avenge thy servant, and the Greeks destroy."

[1] Here used for the Peloponnesus, the large peninsula in the southern part of Greece.

[2] A name given Apollo for having rid the land of Phrygia of field mice. It means "lord of the mice."

[3] Cilla and Chrysa were towns near Troy; Tenedos, an island southwest of Troy.

Thus Chryses pray'd:—the favoring power attends,
And from Olympus' lofty tops descends.
Bent was his bow, the Grecian hearts to wound;
Fierce as he mov'd, his silver shafts resound.
Breathing revenge, a sudden night he spread,
And gloomy darkness roll'd about his head.
The fleet in view, he twang'd his deadly bow,
And hissing fly the feather'd fates[1] below.
On mules and dogs[2] the infection first began;
And last, the vengeful arrows fix'd in man.
For nine long nights, through all the dusky air,
The pyres, thick-flaming, shot a dismal glare.
But ere the tenth revolving day was run,
Inspir'd by Juno,[3] Thetis' godlike son
Conven'd to council[4] all the Grecian train;
For much the goddess mourn'd her heroes slain.
The assembly seated, rising o'er the rest,
Achilles thus the king of men address'd:
"Why leave we not the fatal Trojan shore,
And measure back the seas we cross'd before?[5]
The plague destroying whom the sword would spare,
'Tis time to save the few remains[6] of war.
But let some prophet, or some sacred sage,
Explore the cause of great Apollo's rage;
Or learn the wasteful vengeance to remove
By mystic dreams, for dreams descend from Jove.

[1] "Feathered fates," i.e., arrows bringing the fate of death.

[2] "It has frequently been observed that most pestilences begin with animals, and that Homer had this fact in mind."— POPE.

[3] See Introduction, pp. 7, 10.

[4] "The public assembly in the heroic times was," says Grote, "an assembly for talk. Communication and discussion to a certain extent by the chiefs in person, of the people as listeners and sympathizers — often for eloquence, and sometimes for quarrel — but here its ostensible purposes end."

[5] "Cross'd before," i.e., crossed from Greece. [6] Survivors.

If broken vows this heavy curse have laid,
Let altars smoke, and hecatombs[1] be paid.
So Heaven, aton'd, shall dying Greece restore,
And Phœbus dart his burning shafts no more."
He said,[2] and sat: when Calchas[3] thus replied;
Calchas the wise, the Grecian priest and guide,
That sacred seer, whose comprehensive view,
The past, the present, and the future knew.
Uprising slow, the venerable sage
Thus spoke the prudence and the fears of age:
"Belov'd of Jove, Achilles! would'st thou know
Why angry Phœbus bends his fatal bow?
First give thy faith, and plight a prince's word
Of sure protection, by thy power and sword;
For I must speak what wisdom would conceal,
And truths, invidious[4] to the great, reveal.
Bold is the task, when subjects, grown too wise,
Instruct a monarch where his error lies;
For though we deem the short-lived fury past,
'Tis sure the mighty will revenge at last."
To whom Pelides[5]: "From thy inmost soul
Speak what thou know'st, and speak without control.
E'en by that god I swear who rules the day,
To whom thy hands the vows of Greece convey,
And whose bless'd oracles thy lips declare;
Long as Achilles breathes this vital air,

[1] This word means literally "a sacrifice of a hundred oxen;" but it is often used for any great sacrifice or slaughter.

[2] Finished speaking.

[3] Calchas was a soothsayer or augur; that is, one who observed and interpreted, according to certain rules, the so-called natural signs regarding future events.

[4] The priest knows that what he is about to say will give offense to Agamemnon.

[5] Son of Peleus; Achilles. In this and similar instances the word "answered" must be supplied.

No daring Greek, of all the numerous band,
Against his priest shall lift an impious hand;
Not e'en the chief by whom our hosts are led,
The king of kings, shall touch that sacred head."
  Encourag'd thus, the blameless[1] man replies:
"Nor[2] vows unpaid, nor slighted sacrifice,
But he, our chief, provok'd the raging pest,
Apollo's vengeance for his injur'd priest.
Nor will the god's awaken'd fury cease,
But plagues shall spread, and funeral fires increase,
Till the great king, without a ransom paid,
To her own Chrysa send the black-eyed maid.
Perhaps, with added sacrifice and prayer,
The priest may pardon, and the god may spare."
  The prophet spoke: when with a gloomy frown
The monarch started from his shining throne;
Black choler fill'd his breast that boil'd with ire,
And from his eyeballs flash'd the living fire:
"Augur accurs'd! denouncing mischief still,
Prophet of plagues, forever boding ill!
Still must that tongue some wounding message bring,
And still thy priestly pride provoke thy king?
For this are Phœbus' oracles explor'd,
To teach the Greeks to murmur at their lord?
For this with falsehood is my honor stain'd,
Is heaven offended, and a priest profan'd;—
Because my prize, my beauteous maid, I hold,
And heavenly charms prefer to proffer'd gold?
A maid, unmatch'd in manners as in face,
Skill'd in each art, and crown'd with every grace;
Not half so dear were Clytemnestra's[3] charms,
When first her blooming beauties bless'd my arms.

[1] "This epithet," says Pope, "is not only applied to a priest, but to one who, being conscious of the truth, prepares with an honest boldness to discover it."
[2] Neither. [3] The wife of Agamemnon.

Yet, if the gods demand her, let her sail;
Our cares are only for the public weal.[1]
Let me be deem'd the hateful cause of all,
And suffer, rather than my people fall.
The prize, the beauteous prize, I will resign,
So dearly valued, and so justly mine.
But since for common good I yield the fair,
My private loss let grateful Greece repair;
Nor unrewarded let your prince complain,
That he alone has fought and bled in vain."[2]
"Insatiate king (Achilles thus replies),
Fond of the power, but fonder of the prize!
Would'st thou the Greeks their lawful prey should yield,
The due reward of many a well fought field?
The spoils of cities raz'd and warriors slain,
We share with justice, as with toil we gain;
But to resume whate'er thy avarice craves
(That trick of tyrants) may be borne by slaves.
Yet if our chief for plunder only fight,
The spoils of Ilion[3] shall thy loss requite,
Whene'er, by Jove's decree, our conquering powers
Shall humble to the dust her lofty towers."
Then thus the king: "Shall I my prize resign
With tame content, and thou possess'd of thine?
Great as thou art, and like a god in fight,
Think not to rob me of a soldier's right.
At thy demand shall I restore the maid?
First let the just equivalent be paid,
Such as a king might ask; and let it be
A treasure worthy her, and worthy me.

[1] The king of men acknowledges the subordination of his private to the public interests.

[2] According to the manners and habits of the time of the Iliad public gifts were a measure of the valor and virtues of a chief, and to be deprived of them was a disgrace (see lines 211–220).

[3] Troy.

Or[1] grant me this, or with a monarch's claim
This hand shall seize some other captive dame.
The mighty Ajax[2] shall his prize resign;
Ulysses'[3] spoils, or even thy own, be mine.
The man who suffers, loudly may complain;
And rage he may, but he shall rage in vain.
But this when time requires.—It now remains
We launch a bark to plough the watery plains,
And waft the sacrifice to Chrysa's shores,
With chosen pilots, and with laboring oars.
Soon shall the fair the sable[4] ship ascend,
And some deputed prince the charge attend.
This Creta's[5] king, or Ajax shall fulfill,
Or wise Ulysses see perform'd our will;
Or, if our royal pleasure shall ordain,
Achilles' self conduct her o'er the main;
Let fierce Achilles, dreadful in his rage,
The god propitiate, and the pest assuage."
At this, Pelides, frowning stern, replied:
"O tyrant, arm'd with insolence and pride!
Inglorious slave to interest, ever join'd
With fraud, unworthy of a royal mind!
What generous Greek, obedient to thy word,
Shall form an ambush, or shall lift the sword?
What cause have I to war at thy decree?
The distant Trojans never injur'd me;
To Phthia's[6] realms no hostile troops they led;
Safe in her vales my warlike coursers fed;

[1] Either. [2] See Introduction, p. 9. Tecmessa was Ajax's prize.
[3] See Introduction, p. 9. Laodice was of Ulysses's spoils.
[4] Since Homer constantly speaks of black ships, we must suppose black to have been the stain or paint commonly used in his day for the hull.
[5] Crete, or Candia, the large island south of Greece.
[6] A city in the northern part of Greece, celebrated as the residence of Achilles.

Far hence remov'd, the hoarse-resounding main,
And walls of rocks, secure my native reign,
Whose fruitful soil luxuriant harvests grace,
Rich in her fruits, and in her martial race.
Hither we sail'd, a voluntary throng,
To avenge a private, not a public wrong.[1]
What else to Troy the assembled nations draws,
But thine, ungrateful, and thy brother's cause?
Is this the pay our blood and toils deserve,—
Disgrac'd and injur'd by the man we serve?
And dar'st thou threat to snatch my prize away,
Due to the deeds of many a dreadful day?
A prize as small, O tyrant! match'd with thine,
As thy own actions if compared to mine.
Thine in each conquest is the wealthy prey,
Though mine the sweat and danger of the day.
Some trivial present to my ships I bear,
Or barren praises pay the wounds of war.
But know, proud monarch, I'm thy slave no more;
My fleet shall waft me to Thessalia's[2] shore.
Left by Achilles on the Trojan plain,
What spoils, what conquests, shall Atrides gain?"
To this the king: "Fly, mighty warrior! fly;
Thy aid we need not, and thy threats defy.
There want not chiefs in such a cause to fight,
And Jove himself shall guard a monarch's right.[3]
Of all the kings[4] (the god's distinguish'd care)
To power superior none such hatred bear;

[1] The wrong Paris did Menelaus in carrying off his wife, Helen (see Introduction, p. 9).

[2] Thessaly, the state in the northeastern part of Greece where Achilles lived.

[3] Jove was the guardian of kings.

[4] The minor kings in the army who acknowledged the chieftaincy of Agamemnon.

Strife and debate thy restless soul employ,
And wars and horrors are thy savage joy.
If thou hast strength, 'twas Heaven that strength bestow'd;
For know, vain man! thy valor is from God.
Haste, launch thy vessels, fly with speed away;
Rule thy own realms with arbitrary sway;[1]
I heed thee not, but prize at equal rate
Thy short-liv'd friendship, and thy groundless hate.
Go, threat thy earth-born Myrmidons;[2]—but here
'Tis mine to threaten, prince, and thine to fear.
Know, if the god the beauteous dame demand,
My bark shall waft her to her native land;
But then prepare, imperious prince! prepare,
Fierce as thou art, to yield thy captive fair;
Even in thy tent I'll seize the blooming prize,
Thy lov'd Briseis with the radiant eyes.
Hence shalt thou prove my might, and curse the hour
Thou stood'st a rival of imperial power;
And hence, to all our hosts it shall be known,
That kings are subject to the gods alone."
  Achilles heard; with grief and rage oppress'd,
His heart swell'd high, and labor'd in his breast;
Distracting thoughts by turns his bosom rul'd;
Now fir'd by wrath, and now by reason cool'd;
That[3] prompts his hand to draw the deadly sword,
Force through the Greeks, and pierce their haughty lord;
This[4] whispers soft his vengeance to control,
And calm the rising tempest of his soul.
Just as in anguish of suspense he stay'd,
While half unsheath'd appear'd the glittering blade,

[1] Agamemnon belittles the dominion of Achilles.

[2] These warlike followers of Achilles lived in Phthiotis on the southern border of Thessaly.

[3] The feeling expressed in "fir'd by wrath."

[4] The feeling expressed in "by reason cool'd."

Minerva swift descended from above,[1]
Sent by the sister and the wife of Jove[2]
(For both the princes claim'd her equal care).
Behind she stood, and by the golden hair
Achilles seiz'd, to him alone confess'd;[3]
A sable cloud conceal'd her from the rest.
He sees, and sudden to the goddess cries,
Known by the flames that sparkle from her eyes:
"Descends Minerva, in her guardian care,
A heavenly witness of the wrongs I bear
From Atreus' son?—Then let those eyes that view
The daring crime, behold the vengeance too."
"Forbear (the progeny[4] of Jove replies);
To calm thy fury I forsake the skies.
Let great Achilles, to the gods resign'd,
To reason yield the empire o'er his mind.
By awful Juno this command is given;
The king and you are both the care of heaven.
The force of keen reproaches let him feel;
But sheathe, obedient, thy revenging steel.
For I pronounce (and trust a heavenly power)
Thy injur'd honor has its fated hour,
When the proud monarch shall thy arms implore,
And bribe thy friendship with a boundless store.
Then let revenge no longer bear the sway;
Command thy passions, and the gods obey."
To her Pelides: "With regardful ear,
'Tis just, O goddess! I thy dictates hear.

[1] The goddess of wisdom coming from heaven is an allegory "which may be allowed by every reader to be enforced: the prudence of Achilles checks him in the rashest moment of his anger; it works upon him unseen by others" (see Introduction, p. 7).

[2] Juno was both sister and wife to Jupiter or Jove (see Introduction, p. 7).

[3] Disclosed; revealed.

[4] The allusion is to the legend of the birth of Minerva,—that she sprang in full armor from the head of Jove.

Hard as it is, my vengeance I suppress;
Those who revere the gods the gods will bless."
He said, observant of the blue-eyed maid;
Then in the sheath return'd the shining blade.
The goddess swift to high Olympus flies,
And joins the sacred senate of the skies.[1]
Nor yet the rage his boiling breast forsook,
Which thus redoubling on Atrides broke:
"O monster! mix'd of insolence and fear,
Thou dog in forehead, but in heart a deer![2]
When wert thou known in ambush'd fights to dare,
Or nobly face the horrid front of war?
'Tis ours, the chance of fighting fields to try;
Thine to look on, and bid the valiant die.
So much 'tis safer through the camp to go,
And rob a subject, than despoil a foe.
Scourge of thy people, violent and base!
Sent in Jove's anger on a slavish race
Who, lost to sense of generous freedom past,
Are tam'd to wrongs;—or this had been thy last.
Now by this sacred scepter hear me swear,
Which never more shall leaves or blossoms bear,
Which, sever'd from the trunk (as I from thee),
On the bare mountains left its parent tree;
This scepter, form'd by temper'd steel to prove
An ensign of the delegates of Jove,[3]
From whom the power of laws and justice springs
(Tremendous oath! inviolate to kings),—
By this I swear:—when bleeding Greece again
Shall call Achilles, she shall call in vain.

[1] "Senate of the skies," i.e., the council or governing body of the gods.

[2] Insolently bold as a dog in carriage but timid as a deer at heart.

[3] The right of the kings to rule was given, or delegated, by Jove. To swear by the scepter or staff, the sign of kingship, was to swear by God and by justice itself.

When, flush'd with slaughter, Hector comes to spread
The purpled shore with mountains of the dead,[1]
Then shalt thou mourn the affront thy madness gave,
Forc'd to deplore when impotent to save;
Then rage in bitterness of soul to know
This act has made the bravest[2] Greek thy foe."
He spoke; and furious hurl'd against the ground
His scepter starr'd with golden studs around;
Then sternly silent sat. With like disdain
The raging king return'd his frowns again.
To calm their passion with the words of age,
Slow from his seat arose the Pylian[3] sage,
Experienced Nestor, in persuasion skill'd;
Words, sweet as honey, from his lips distill'd.
Two generations now had pass'd away,
Wise by his rules, and happy by his sway;
Two ages[4] o'er his native realm he reign'd,
And now the example[5] of the third remain'd.
All view'd with awe the venerable man,
Who thus with mild benevolence began:
"What shame, what woe is this to Greece! what joy
To Troy's proud monarch,[6] and the friends of Troy!
That adverse gods commit to stern debate
The best, the bravest, of the Grecian state.
Young as ye are, this youthful heat restrain,
Nor think your Nestor's years and wisdom vain.

[1] See Introduction, p. 10.

[2] Of this self-praise Pope says: "It is permitted to a man of merit and figure who is injuriously dealt with, to speak frankly of himself to those who are forgetful and unthankful."

[3] Nestor was King of Pylus, a city of southwestern Greece.

[4] In the Odyssey we read that Nestor reigned over three generations. By this computation he must have been nearly a hundred years old.

[5] Model; pattern.

[6] Priam. He was the father of Paris, whose conduct caused the Trojan War.

A godlike race of heroes once I knew,
Such as no more these aged eyes shall view!
Lives there a chief to match Pirithous'[1] fame,
Dryas[2] the bold, or Ceneus'[3] deathless name?
Theseus,[4] endued with more than mortal might,
Or Polyphemus,[5] like the gods in fight?
With these of old, to toils of battle bred,
In early youth my hardy days I led.
Fir'd with the thirst which virtuous envy breeds,
And smit with love of honorable deeds,
Strongest of men, they pierc'd the mountain boar,
Rang'd the wild deserts red with monsters' gore,
And from their hills the shaggy Centaurs tore.
Yet these with soft persuasive arts I sway'd;
When Nestor spoke, they listen'd and obey'd.
If in my youth, even these esteem'd me wise;
Do you, young warriors, hear my age advise.—
Atrides, seize not on the beauteous slave;
That prize the Greeks by common suffrage gave.—
Nor thou, Achilles, treat our prince with pride;
Let kings be just, and sovereign power preside.
Thee, the first honors of the war adorn,
Like gods in strength, and of a goddess born;
Him, awful majesty exalts above
The powers of earth, and scepter'd sons of Jove.
Let both unite with well-consenting mind;
So shall authority with strength be join'd.—
Leave me, O king! to calm Achilles' rage;
Rule thou thyself, as more advanc'd in age.—

[1] At the marriage of Pirithous, King of the Lapithæ in Thessaly, one of the Centaurs, (a legendary race half man, half horse,) carried off the bride Hippodamia. This theft gave rise to the famous quarrel between the Centaurs and the Lapithæ (see Guerber's Myths of Greece and Rome, p. 260).

[2] Dryas was a hunter. [3] A famous king of the Lapithæ.

[4] The legendary founder of the Athenian state.

[5] A giant who dwelt in a cave near Mt. Etna.

Forbid it, gods! Achilles should be lost,
The pride of Greece, and bulwark of our host."
This said, he ceas'd. The king of men replies:
"Thy years are awful, and thy words are wise.
But that imperious, that unconquer'd soul,
No laws can limit, no respect control.
Before his pride must his superiors fall,
His word the law, and he the lord of all?
Him must our hosts, our chiefs, ourself obey?
What king can bear a rival in his sway?
Grant that the gods his matchless force have given;
Has foul reproach a privilege from heaven?"
Here on the monarch's speech Achilles broke,
And furious, thus, and interrupting, spoke:
"Tyrant, I well deserv'd thy galling chain,
To live thy slave, and still to serve in vain,
Should I submit to each unjust decree;
Command thy vassals, but command not me.
Seize on Briseis, whom the Grecians doom'd
My prize of war, yet tamely see resum'd;
And seize secure; no more Achilles draws
His conquering sword in any woman's[1] cause.
The gods command me to forgive the past;
But let this first invasion be the last.
For know, thy blood, when next thou dar'st invade,
Shall stream in vengeance on my reeking blade."
At this they ceas'd; the stern debate expir'd;
The chiefs in sullen majesty retir'd.
Achilles with Patroclus[2] took his way
Where near his tents his hollow vessels lay.
Meantime Atrides launch'd with numerous oars
A well-rigg'd ship for Chrysa's sacred shores;

[1] By this sharp turn Achilles refers to Helen, and refuses longer to war on her account.

[2] See Introduction, p. 10.

High on the deck was fair Chryseis plac'd,
And sage Ulysses with the conduct grac'd.
Safe in her sides the hecatomb they stow'd,
Then swiftly sailing, cut the liquid road.
The host to expiate next the king prepares,
With pure lustrations,[1] and with solemn prayers.
Wash'd by the briny wave, the pious train
Are cleans'd; and cast the ablutions in the main.[2]
Along the shore whole hecatombs were laid,
And bulls and goats to Phœbus' altars paid;
The sable fumes in curling spires arise,
And waft their grateful odors to the skies.
The army thus in sacred rites engag'd,
Atrides still with deep resentment rag'd.
To wait his will two sacred[3] heralds stood,
Talthybius and Eurybates the good.
"Haste to the fierce Achilles' tent (he cries),
Thence bear Briseis as our royal prize.
Submit he must; or if they will not part,
Ourself in arms shall tear her from his heart."
The unwilling heralds act their lord's commands;
Pensive they walk along the barren sands.
Arriv'd, the hero in his tent they find,
With gloomy aspect on his arm reclin'd.
At awful distance[4] long they silent stand,
Loath to advance, and speak their hard command;
Decent confusion![5] This the godlike man
Perceiv'd, and thus with accent mild began:

[1] Ceremonial washings with salt water were practiced among the Greeks, to free from the pollution of sin.

[2] The water used they cast back in the great purifier, the sea.

[3] The persons of heralds were of special sanctity, and they were allowed to travel whither they would without molestation.

[4] "Awful distance," i.e., a distance expressive of their awe.

[5] "Decent confusion," i.e., fitting hesitation.

"With leave and honor enter our abodes,
Ye sacred ministers of men and gods!
I know your message; by constraint you came;
Not you, but your imperious lord I blame.—
Patroclus, haste, the fair Briseis bring;
Conduct my captive to the haughty king.—
But witness, heralds, and proclaim my vow,
Witness to gods above, and men below!
But first, and loudest, to your prince declare
(That lawless tyrant whose commands you bear),
Unmov'd as death Achilles shall remain,
Though prostrate Greece shall bleed at every vein.
The raging chief, in frantic passion lost,
Blind to himself, and useless to his host,
Unskill'd to judge the future by the past,
In blood and slaughter shall repent at last."
Patroclus now the unwilling beauty brought;
She, in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,
Pass'd silent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back, slow-moving o'er the strand.
Not so his loss the fierce Achilles bore;
But sad, retiring to the sounding shore,
O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
That kindred deep from whence his mother sprung.
There bath'd in tears of anger and disdain,
Thus loud lamented to the stormy main:
"O parent goddess! since in early bloom
Thy son must fall,[1] by too severe a doom;
Sure to so short a race of glory born,
Great Jove in justice should this span adorn.
Honor and fame at least the Thunderer[2] ow'd
And ill he pays the promise of a god,

[1] Thetis had foretold that her son might have a long, inglorious life at home, or a short and glorious one at Troy whence he should never return. He chose the latter fate.

[2] See lines 684–687.

If yon proud monarch thus thy son defies,
Obscures my glories, and resumes my prize."
Far from the deep recesses of the main,
Where aged Ocean [1] holds his watery reign,
The goddess-mother heard. The waves divide;
And like a mist [2] she rose above the tide;
Beheld him mourning on the naked shores,
And thus the sorrows of his soul explores:
"Why grieves my son? Thy anguish let me share;
Reveal the cause, and trust a parent's care."
He deeply sighing said: "To tell my woe
Is but to mention what too well you know.
From Thebé,[3] sacred to Apollo's name
(Aëtion's realm), our conquering army came,
With treasure loaded and triumphant spoils,
Whose just division crown'd the soldier's toils;
But bright Chryseis, heavenly prize! was led,
By vote selected, to the general's bed.
The priest of Phœbus sought by gifts to gain
His beauteous daughter from the victor's chain;
The fleet he reach'd, and, lowly bending down,
Held forth the scepter and the laurel crown,
Intreating all; but chief implor'd for grace
The brother-kings of Atreus' royal race.
The generous Greeks their joint consent declare,
The priest to reverence, and release the fair;
Not so Atrides; he, with wonted pride,
The sire insulted, and his gifts denied.
The insulted sire (his god's peculiar care)
To Phœbus pray'd, and Phœbus heard the prayer.

[1] Thetis's father, Nereus, is meant.

[2] Many of the divinities of the Greeks were forces of nature personified. The mist would be a child of the ocean (see lines 644, 645).

[3] A town southeast of Troy, below the southern slope of Mt. Ida. It was governed by Aëtion, father of Hector's wife, Andromache.

A dreadful plague ensues; the avenging darts
Incessant fly, and pierce the Grecian hearts.
A prophet then, inspir'd by heaven, arose,
And points the crime, and thence derives the woes;
Myself the first the assembled chiefs incline
To avert the vengeance of the power divine.
Then rising in his wrath, the monarch storm'd;
Incens'd he threaten'd, and his threats perform'd:
The fair Chryseis to her sire was sent,
With offer'd gifts to make the god relent;
But now he seiz'd Briseis' heavenly charms,
And of my valor's prize defrauds my arms,
Defrauds the votes [1] of all the Grecian train;
And service, faith, and justice, plead in vain.
But, goddess! thou thy suppliant son attend.
To high Olympus' shining court ascend,
Urge all the ties to former service ow'd,
And sue for vengeance to the thundering god.
Oft hast thou triumph'd in the glorious boast
That thou stood'st forth of all the ethereal host,
When bold rebellion shook the realms above,
The undaunted guard of cloud-compelling [2] Jove,
When the bright partner of his awful reign, [3]
The warlike maid, [4] and monarch of the main, [5]
The traitor-gods, by mad ambition driven,
Durst threat with chains the omnipotence of Heaven.
Then, call'd by thee, the monster Titan [6] came

[1] The votes of the Greeks had allotted the prize to Achilles.

[2] Collecting or driving clouds; an Homeric epithet of Jove.

[3] "Bright partner," etc., i.e., Juno, or Hera.

[4] "Warlike maid," i.e., Minerva, or Athene.

[5] "Monarch of the main," i.e., Neptune, or Poseidon, the supreme god of the sea and the mover of earthquakes.

[6] A race of early divinities who scaled the heights of heaven, piled mountain on mountain, and showed their enormous size and strength in other lawless acts.

(Whom gods Briareus, men Ægeon name[1]),
Through wondering skies[2] enormous stalk'd along;
Not he[3] that shakes the solid earth so strong.
With giant pride at Jove's high throne he stands,
And brandish'd round him all his hundred hands;
The affrighted gods confess'd their awful lord,
They dropp'd the fetters, trembled, and ador'd.
This, goddess, this to his remembrance call,
Embrace his knees, at his tribunal fall;
Conjure him far to drive the Grecian train,
To hurl them headlong to their fleet and main,
To heap the shores with copious death,[4] and bring
The Greeks to know the curse of such a king.
Let Agamemnon lift his haughty head
O'er all his wide dominion of the dead,
And mourn in blood that e'er he durst disgrace
The boldest warrior of the Grecian race."
"Unhappy son! (fair Thetis thus replies,
While tears celestial trickle from her eyes,)
Why have I borne thee with a mother's throes
To fates averse, and nurs'd for future woes?[5]
So short a space the light of heaven to view!
So short a space! and fill'd with sorrow too!
O might a parent's careful wish prevail,
Far, far from Ilion should thy vessels sail,
And thou, from camps remote, the danger shun
Which now, alas! too nearly threats my son.
Yet (what I can) to move thy suit I'll go
To great Olympus crown'd with fleecy snow.

[1] Homer speaks in several places of the difference between the language of gods and that of men.

[2] "Wondering skies," i.e., the dwellers in the skies admired and were amazed.

[3] Neptune.

[4] "With copious death," i.e., with many dead bodies.

[5] See lines 460–465.

Meantime, secure within thy ships, from far
Behold the field, nor mingle in the war.
The sire of gods and all the ethereal train,
On the warm limits[1] of the farthest main,
Now mix with mortals, nor disdain to grace
The feasts of Ethiopia's blameless race;[2]
Twelve days the powers indulge the genial rite,
Returning with the twelfth revolving light.
Then will I mount the brazen dome,[3] and move
The high tribunal of immortal Jove."
The goddess spoke; the rolling waves unclose;
Then down the steep she plung'd from whence she rose,
And left him sorrowing on the lonely coast,
In wild resentment for the fair[4] he lost.
In Chrysa's port now sage Ulysses rode,
Beneath the deck the destin'd victims stow'd;
The sails they furl'd, they lash the mast aside,
And dropp'd their anchors, and the pinnace tied.
Next on the shore their hecatomb they land;
Chryseis last descending on the strand.
Her, thus returning from the furrow'd main,
Ulysses led to Phœbus' sacred fane;
Where at his solemn altar, as the maid
He gave to Chryses, thus the hero said:
"Hail, reverend priest! to Phœbus' awful dome
A suppliant I from great Atrides come.
Unransom'd, here receive the spotless fair;
Accept the hecatomb the Greeks prepare;

[1] The earth in Homeric times was believed to be flat, and round it was the all-encircling stream of Oceanus.

[2] "The Ethiopians are the inventors of pomps, sacrifices, solemn meetings, and other honors paid to the gods. From this arose their character of piety, which is here celebrated by Homer. Among them there was an annual feast at Diospolis, wherein they carried about the statues of Jupiter and other gods for twelve days."— POPE.

[3] The dome of Olympus, as resplendent as burnished brass. [4] Briseis.

And may thy god who scatters darts around,
Aton'd[1] by sacrifice, desist to wound."
At this the sire embrac'd the maid again,
So sadly lost, so lately sought in vain.
Then near the altar of the darting[2] king,
Dispos'd in rank their hecatomb they bring;
With water purify their hands, and take
The sacred offering of the salted cake;
While thus with arms devoutly rais'd in air,
And solemn voice, the priest directs his prayer:
"God of the silver bow, thy ear incline,
Whose power encircles Cilla the divine;
Whose sacred eye thy Tenedos surveys,
And gilds fair Chrysa with distinguish'd rays!
If, fir'd to vengeance at thy priest's request,
Thy direful darts inflict the raging pest,
Once more attend! avert the wasteful woe,
And smile propitious, and unbend thy bow."
So Chryses pray'd. Apollo heard his prayer.
And now the Greeks their hecatomb prepare;
Between their horns the salted barley threw,[3]
And, with their heads to heaven,[4] the victims slew;
The limbs they sever from the inclosing hide;
The thighs, selected to the gods, divide;
On these, in double cauls involv'd with art,
The choicest morsels lay from every part.
The priest himself before his altar stands,
And burns the offering with his holy hands,
Pours the black wine, and sees the flames aspire;
The youth with instruments surround the fire.

[1] Reconciled.
[2] Hurling darts or arrows.
[3] One of the rites of sacrifice.
[4] "If the sacrifice was in honor of the celestial gods, the throat was bent upward towards heaven; but if made to the heroes, or infernal deities, it was killed with its throat towards the ground."

The thighs thus sacrific'd, and entrails dress'd,
The assistants part, transfix, and roast the rest;
Then spread the tables, the repast prepare;
Each takes his seat, and each receives his share.
When now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
With pure libations[1] they conclude the feast;
The youths with wine the copious goblets crown'd,[2]
And, pleas'd, dispense the flowing bowls around;
With hymns divine the joyous banquet ends,
The pæans[3] lengthen'd till the sun descends;
The Greeks, restored, the grateful notes prolong;
Apollo listens, and approves the song.
'Twas night; the chiefs beside their vessel lie,
Till rosy morn had purpled o'er the sky;
Then launch, and hoist the mast; indulgent gales,
Supplied by Phœbus, fill the swelling sails;
The milk-white canvas bellying[4] as they blow,
The parted ocean foams and roars below.
Above the bounding billows swift they flew,
Till now the Grecian camp appear'd in view.
Far on the beach they haul their bark to land
(The crooked keel divides the yellow sand);
Then part, where stretch'd along the winding bay,
The ships and tents in mingled prospect lay.
But raging still, amidst his navy sat
The stern Achilles, steadfast in his hate;
Nor mix'd in combat, nor in council join'd;
But wasting cares lay heavy on his mind.
In his black thoughts revenge and slaughter roll,
And scenes of blood rise dreadful in his soul.

[1] Offerings of a liquid, commonly wine, which were poured out upon the ground or upon the sacrifice in honor of some divinity.

[2] Filled to the very brim.

[3] Hymns of praise and thanksgiving to Apollo. Later than Homer the pæan was a song to other gods as well.

[4] Filling; swelling out.

Twelve days were past, and now the dawning light
The gods had summon'd to the Olympian height.
Jove, first ascending from the watery bowers,[1]
Leads the long order of ethereal powers;
When, like the morning mist in early day,
Rose from the flood the daughter of the sea,
And to the seats divine her flight address'd.
There, far apart, and high above the rest,
The Thunderer sat; where old Olympus shrouds
His hundred heads[2] in heaven, and props the clouds.
Suppliant the goddess stood; one hand she plac'd
Beneath his beard, and one his knees embrac'd.[3]
"If e'er, O father of the gods! (she said)
My words could please thee, or my actions aid,
Some marks of honor on my son bestow,
And pay in glory what in life you owe.
Fame is at least by heavenly promise due
To life so short, and now dishonor'd too.
Avenge this wrong, O ever just and wise!
Let Greece be humbled, and the Trojans rise;
Till the proud king and all the Achaian[4] race
Shall heap with honors him they now disgrace."
Thus Thetis spoke; but Jove in silence held
The sacred counsels of his breast conceal'd.
Not so repuls'd, the goddess closer press'd,
Still grasp'd his knees, and urg'd the dear request.
"O sire of gods and men! thy suppliant hear;
Refuse, or grant; for what has Jove to fear?
Or oh! declare, of all the powers above,
Is wretched Thetis least the care of Jove?"

[1] According to legend the Ethiopians lived near the stream of Oceanus.

[2] "Upon the highest peak of many-ridged Olympus," says Homer. The rugged outline of the mountain is broken in many ridges and precipices.

[3] This was the attitude of the suppliant among the Greeks.

[4] Grecian.

She said; and, sighing, thus the god replies,
Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies:
"What hast thou ask'd? ah, why should Jove engage
In foreign contests and domestic rage,
The gods' complaints, and Juno's fierce alarms,
While I, too partial, aid the Trojan arms?[1]
Go, lest the haughty partner of my sway
With jealous eyes thy close access survey.
But part in peace, secure thy prayer is sped;
Witness the sacred honors of our head,
The nod that ratifies the will divine,
The faithful, fix'd, irrevocable sign;
This seals thy suit, and this fulfills thy vows."
He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows,
Shakes his ambrosial[2] curls, and gives the nod,
The stamp of fate and sanction of the god.
High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,
And all Olympus to the center shook.[3]
Swift to the seas profound the goddess flies,
Jove to his starry mansions in the skies.

[1] Jove holds the balance between the divinities who favor the Greeks and those who would aid the Trojans.

[2] Ambrosia was a celestial substance of which the gods partook, and ambrosial would refer to a fragrance or sweet smell.

[3] This description of Jove, or Zeus, was very famous in Greece. "When a friend inquired of Phidias [the sculptor] from what pattern he had formed his Olympian Jupiter, he is said to have answered by repeating these lines of the first Iliad in which the poet represents the majesty of the god in the most sublime terms; thereby signifying that the genius of Homer had inspired him with it. Those who beheld this statue are said to have been so struck with it as to have asked whether Jupiter had descended from heaven to show himself to Phidias, or whether Phidias had been carried thither to contemplate the god."

"So was his will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook heav'n's whole circumference, confirm'd."
PARADISE LOST, Book II. line 351.

The shining synod of the immortals wait
The coming god, and from their thrones of state
Arising silent, wrapp'd in holy fear,
Before the majesty of Heaven appear.
Trembling they stand, while Jove assumes the throne,
All, but the god's imperious queen alone.
Late had she view'd the silver-footed[1] dame,
And all her passions kindled into flame.
"Say, artful manager of heaven (she cries),
Who now partakes the secrets of the skies?
Thy Juno knows not the decrees of fate,
In vain the partner of imperial state.
What favorite goddess then those cares divides,
Which Jove in prudence from his consort hides?"[2]
To this the Thunderer: "Seek not thou to find
The sacred counsels of almighty mind;
Involv'd in darkness lies the great decree,
Nor can the depths of fate be pierc'd by thee.
What fits thy knowledge, thou the first shalt know,
The first of gods above, and men below;
But thou, nor they, shall search the thoughts that roll
Deep in the close recesses of my soul."
Full on the Sire the goddess of the skies
Roll'd the large orbs of her majestic eyes,
And thus return'd: "Austere Saturnius,[3] say,
From whence this wrath, or who controls thy sway?
Thy boundless will, for me, remains in force,
And all thy counsels take the destin'd course.
But 'tis for Greece I fear; for late was seen,
In close consult, the silver-footed queen.

[1] This beautiful epithet with which Homer constantly describes the sea nymph may have arisen from the silvery appearance of a white foot when seen through the glistening waters of the sea.

[2] In this scene Homer deals humorously with Zeus and Hera, and shows them in passions which it would be beneath the dignity of his heroes to nurse.

[3] An epithet applied to Jupiter because he was the son of Saturn.

Jove to his Thetis nothing could deny,
Nor was the signal vain that shook the sky.
What fatal favor has the goddess won,
To grace her fierce, inexorable son?
Perhaps in Grecian blood to drench the plain,
And glut his vengeance with my people slain."
  Then thus the god: "O restless fate of pride,
That strives to learn what Heaven resolves to hide;
Vain is the search, presumptuous and abhorr'd,
Anxious to thee, and odious to thy lord.
Let this suffice: the immutable decree
No force can shake; what is, that ought to be.
Goddess, submit; nor dare our will withstand,
But dread the power of this avenging hand;
The united strength of all the gods above
In vain resists the omnipotence of Jove."
  The Thunderer spoke, nor durst the queen reply;
A reverent horror silenc'd all the sky.
The feast disturb'd, with sorrow Vulcan[1] saw
His mother menac'd, and the gods in awe.
Peace at his heart, and pleasure his design,
Thus interpos'd the architect divine:
"The wretched quarrels of the mortal state
Are far unworthy, gods, of your debate.
Let men their days in senseless strife employ,
We, in eternal peace and constant joy.
Thou, goddess mother, with our sire comply,
Nor break the sacred union of the sky;
Lest, rous'd to rage, he shake the bless'd abodes,
Launch the red lightning, and dethrone the gods.
If you submit, the Thunderer stands appeas'd;
The gracious power is willing to be pleas'd."

[1] Vulcan was the god of fire and of the working of metals as well as the patron of handicraftsmen; hence "architect" in line 741 has its Greek signification, "chief worker."

Thus Vulcan spoke; and rising with a bound,
The double bowl[1] with sparkling nectar[2] crown'd,
Which held to Juno in a cheerful way:
"Goddess (he cried), be patient and obey.
Dear as you are, if Jove his arm extend,
I can but grieve, unable to defend.
What god so daring in your aid to move,
Or lift his hand against the force of Jove?
Once in your cause I felt his matchless might,
Hurl'd headlong down from the ethereal height;
Toss'd all the day in rapid circles round;
Nor till the sun descended touch'd the ground.
Breathless I fell, in giddy motion lost;
The Sinthians rais'd me on the Lemnian coast."[3]
He said, and to her hands the goblet heav'd,
Which, with a smile, the white-arm'd queen receiv'd.
Then, to the rest he fill'd; and in his turn,
Each to his lips applied the nectar'd urn;

[1] "Double bowl," i.e., a cup at both ends of a middle stem or handle.

[2] A drink of the gods which gave a divine beauty and vigor to those who partook of it, and saved them from all decay.

[3] The Sinthians were a race of robbers in Lemnos, which island, after the aid its people bore the god, was ever sacred to Vulcan. The reference is to the occasion on which Jove, to punish Juno for aiding Hercules, fastened iron anvils to her feet, and hung her from the sky. Vulcan, attempting to relieve her, was kicked down from Olympus.

> "Nor was his name unheard or unador'd
> In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
> Men call'd him Mulciber; and how he fell
> From heav'n they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
> Sheer o'er the crystal battlements; from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropp'd from the zenith like a falling star
> On Lemnos, th' Ægean isle; thus they relate."
>
> PARADISE LOST, Book I. line 738.

Vulcan with awkward[1] grace his office plies,
And unextinguish'd[2] laughter shakes the skies.
Thus the blest gods the genial day prolong
In feasts ambrosial, and celestial song.[3]
Apollo tun'd the lyre; the Muses[4] round
With voice alternate aid the silver sound.
Meantime the radiant sun to mortal sight
Descending swift, roll'd down the rapid light.
Then to their starry domes the gods depart,
The shining monuments of Vulcan's art;
Jove on his couch reclin'd his awful head,
And Juno slumber'd on the golden bed.

[1] Because of his lameness.

[2] The Greek word here is *asbestos* ("that which cannot be quenched").

[3] "The gods formed a sort of political community of their own, which had its hierarchy, its distribution of ranks and duties, its contentions for power and occasional revolutions, its public meetings in the agora of Olympus, and its multitudinous banquets or festivals."— GROTE.

[4] The goddesses, nine in number, who presided over poetry, science, and the arts. Apollo was their leader.

BOOK VI.[1]

THE EPISODES OF GLAUCUS AND DIOMED,[2] AND OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

THE ARGUMENT.

The gods having left the field, the Grecians prevail. Helenus, Hector's brother, the chief augur of Troy, commands Hector to return to the city, in order to appoint a solemn procession of the queen and the Trojan matrons to the temple of Minerva, to entreat her to remove Diomed from the fight. The battle relaxing during the absence of Hector, Glaucus and Diomed have an interview between the two armies; where, coming to the knowledge of the friendship and hospitality passed between their ancestors, they make exchange of their arms. Hector, having performed the orders of Helenus, prevails upon Paris to return to the battle, and, taking a tender leave of his wife Andromache, hastens again to the field.

The scene is first in the field of battle, between the rivers Simois and Scamander, and then changes to Troy.

Now heaven forsakes the fight; the immortals yield
To human force and human skill the field.
Dark showers of javelins fly from foes to foes;
Now here, now there, the tide of combat flows;
While Troy's fam'd streams,[3] that bound the deathful plain
On either side, run purple to the main.
Great Ajax first to conquest led the way,
Broke the thick ranks, and turn'd the doubtful day.

[1] The books between the first and the sixth tell of the advance of the armies, the making of a truce, the duel between Paris and Menelaus, and the part of the first battle in which Venus, Apollo, and Mars are in the field aiding the Trojans, and Juno and Minerva the Greeks.

[2] Diomedes, Diomed, or Tydides, the son of Tydeus, was King of Athens and, next to Achilles, the bravest hero among the Greeks. Glaucus was a prince of Lycia in Asia Minor, who enlisted with Priam in the Trojan War.

[3] Simois and Scamander.

The Thracian Acamas his falchion found,[1]
And hew'd the enormous giant to the ground;
His thundering arm a deadly stroke impress'd
Where the black horsehair[2] nodded o'er his crest;
Fix'd in his front the brazen weapon lies,
And seals in endless shades his swimming eyes.
Next Teuthras' son distain'd[3] the sands with blood,
Axylus, hospitable, rich, and good;
In fair Arisbe's[4] walls (his native place)
He held his seat; a friend to human race.
Fast by the road, his ever-open door
Oblig'd the wealthy and reliev'd the poor.
To stern Tydides now he falls a prey,
No friend to guard him in the dreadful day!
Breathless the good man fell, and by his side
His faithful servant, old Calesius died.
By great Euryalus was Dresus slain,
And next he laid Opheltius on the plain.
Two twins were near, bold, beautiful, and young,
From a fair naiad and Bucolion[5] sprung;
(Laomedon's white flocks Bucolion fed,
That monarch's firstborn,—he a nymph had wed;
In secret woods he won the naiad's grace,
And two fair infants crown'd their father's race.)
Here dead they lay in all their youthful charms;
The ruthless victor stripp'd their shining arms.
Astyalus by Polypœtes fell;
Ulysses' spear Pidytes sent to hell;
By Teucer's shaft brave Aretaön bled,
And Nestor's son laid stern Ablerus dead;

[1] "Acamas," etc., i.e., Ajax's falchion (sword) struck Acamas.
[2] A plume of horsehair on the crest of his helmet.
[3] Stained; discolored. [4] A town northeast of Troy.
[5] A son of Laomedon and a sea nymph. Laomedon was a king of Troy and the father of Priam.

Great Agamemnon, leader of the brave,
The mortal wound of rich Elatus gave,
Who held in Pedasus[1] his proud abode,
And till'd the banks where silver Satnio flow'd.
Melanthius by Eurypylus was slain;
And Phylacus from Leitus flies in vain.
Unbless'd Adrastus next at mercy lies
Beneath the Spartan spear,[2] a living prize.
Scar'd with the din and tumult of the fight,
His headlong steeds, precipitate in flight,
Rush'd on a tamarisk's strong trunk, and broke
The shatter'd chariot from the crooked yoke;
Wide o'er the field, resistless as the wind,
For Troy they fly, and leave their lord behind.
Prone on his face he sinks beside the wheel;
Atrides o'er him shakes his vengeful steel;
The fallen chief in suppliant posture press'd
The victor's knees, and thus his prayer address'd:
"O spare my youth, and for the life I owe,
Large gifts of price my father shall bestow
When fame shall tell that, not in battle slain,
Thy hollow ships his captive son detain.
Rich heaps of brass shall in thy tent be told,[3]
And steel well-temper'd, and persuasive gold."
He said: compassion touch'd the hero's heart;
He stood, suspended with the lifted dart.
As pity pleaded for his vanquish'd prize,
Stern Agamemnon swift to vengeance flies,
And, furious, thus: "Oh impotent of mind!
Shall these, shall these Atrides' mercy find?
Well hast thou known proud Troy's perfidious land,
And well her natives merit at thy hand!

[1] A town south of Troy upon the river Satnioeis.
[2] "Spartan spear," i.e., the spear of the King of Sparta, Menelaus.
[3] Counted out, and given as a ransom.

Not one of all the race, nor sex, nor age,
Shall save a Trojan from our boundless rage;
Ilion shall perish whole, and bury all;
Her babes, her infants at the breast, shall fall;
A dreadful lesson of exampled fate,
To warn the nations, and to curb the great!"
The monarch spoke; the words, with warmth address'd,
To rigid justice steel'd his brother's breast.
Fierce from his knees the hapless chief he thrust,
The monarch's javelin stretch'd him in the dust;
Then pressing with his foot his panting heart,
Forth from the slain he tugg'd the reeking dart.
Old Nestor saw, and rous'd the warrior's rage:
"Thus, heroes! thus the vigorous combat wage;
No son of Mars[1] descend, for servile gains,
To touch the booty, while a foe remains.
Behold yon glittering host, your future spoil!
First gain the conquest, then reward the toil."
And now had Greece eternal fame acquir'd,
And frighted Troy within her walls retir'd,
Had not sage Helenus her state redress'd,
Taught by the gods that mov'd his sacred breast.
Where Hector stood, with great Æneas[2] join'd,
The seer reveal'd the counsels of his mind:
"Ye generous chiefs! on whom the immortals lay
The cares and glories of this doubtful day;
On whom your aids, your country's hopes depend;
Wise to consult, and active to defend!
Here, at our gates, your brave efforts unite,
Turn back the routed, and forbid the flight,
Ere yet their wives' soft arms the cowards gain,

[1] "Son of Mars," i.e., warrior.

[2] Æneas, the son of Venus and a mortal father, was to the Trojans what Achilles was to the Greeks. The Greeks called Hector the hand, and Æneas the soul, of the Trojans (see Introduction, p. 9).

The sport and insult of the hostile train.
When your commands have hearten'd every band,
Ourselves, here fix'd, will make the dangerous stand;
Press'd as we are, and sore of former fight,
These straits demand our last remains of might.—
Meanwhile thou, Hector, to the town retire,
And teach our mother what the gods require:
Direct the queen to lead the assembled train
Of Troy's chief matrons to Minerva's fane,
Unbar the sacred gates, and seek the power,
With offer'd vows, in Ilion's topmost tower.
The largest mantle her rich wardrobes hold,
Most priz'd for art, and labor'd o'er with gold,
Before the goddess' honor'd knees be spread,
And twelve young heifers to her altars led;
If so[1] the power, aton'd by fervent prayer,
Our wives, our infants, and our city spare,
And far avert Tydides'[2] wasteful ire,
That mows whole troops, and makes all Troy retire.
Not thus Achilles taught our hosts to dread,—
Sprung though he was from more than mortal bed;—
Not thus resistless rul'd the stream of fight,
In rage unbounded, and unmatch'd in might."
  Hector obedient heard, and, with a bound,
Leap'd from his trembling chariot to the ground;
Through all his host inspiring force he flies,
And bids the thunder of the battle rise;
With rage recruited the bold Trojans glow,
And turn the tide of conflict on the foe.
Fierce in the front he shakes two dazzling spears;
All Greece recedes, and 'midst her triumphs fears;

[1] "If so," i.e., in the hope that.

[2] "The poet here plainly supposes Helenus, by his skill in augury or some other divine inspiration, well informed that the might of Diomed [told of in Book V.] was the gift of Pallas incensed against the Trojans."—POPE.

Some god, they thought, who rul'd the fate of wars,
Shot down avenging from the vault of stars.
Then thus aloud: "Ye dauntless Dardans,[1] hear!-
And you whom distant nations send to war!
Be mindful of the strength your fathers bore;
Be still yourselves, and Hector asks no more.
One hour demands me in the Trojan wall,
To bid our altars flame, and victims fall;
Nor shall, I trust, the matrons' holy train,
And reverend elders, seek the gods in vain."
This said, with ample strides the hero pass'd,
The shield's large orb behind his shoulder cast,
His neck o'ershading, to his ankle hung;
And as he march'd the brazen buckler rung.
Now paus'd the battle (godlike Hector gone),
Where daring Glaucus and great Tydeus' son
Between both armies met; the chiefs from far
Observ'd each other, and had mark'd for war.
Near as they drew, Tydides thus began:
"What art thou, boldest of the race of man?
Our eyes till now that aspect ne'er beheld,
Where fame is reap'd amid the embattled field;
Yet far before the troops thou dar'st appear,
And meet a lance the fiercest heroes fear.
Unhappy they, and born of luckless sires,
Who tempt our fury when Minerva fires![2]
But if from heaven, celestial, thou descend,
Know with immortals we no more contend.
Not long Lycurgus[3] view'd the golden light,—

[1] Trojans.

[2] The goddess of wisdom had been fighting beside Diomed in his chariot.

[3] A king of Thrace who attacked Bacchus and his followers on their passage through his country. His land became sterile, and his subjects bound and exposed Lycurgus to the violence of wild horses in order to appease the gods and regain the fertility of their land.

That daring man who mix'd with gods in fight.
Bacchus, and Bacchus' votaries, he drove,
With brandish'd steel, from Nyssa's[1] sacred grove;
Their consecrated spears lay scatter'd round,
With curling vines and twisted ivy bound;
While Bacchus headlong sought the briny flood,
And Thetis' arms receiv'd the trembling god.
Nor fail'd the crime the immortals' wrath to move
(The immortals bless'd with endless ease above);
Depriv'd of sight by their avenging doom,
Cheerless he breath'd, and wander'd in the gloom,
Then sunk unpitied to the dire abodes,
A wretch accurs'd, and hated by the gods!
I brave not heaven; but if the fruits of earth
Sustain thy life, and human be thy birth,
Bold as thou art, too prodigal of breath,
Approach, and enter the dark gates of death."
"What, or from whence I am, or who my sire,
(Replied the chief,) can Tydeus' son inquire?
Like leaves on trees[2] the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise;
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these when those are pass'd away.
But if thou still persist to search my birth,
Then hear a tale that fills the spacious earth.
"A city stands on Argos' utmost bound,
(Argos the fair, for warlike steeds renown'd;)
Æolian Sisyphus,[3] with wisdom bless'd,
In ancient time the happy wall possess'd,

[1] The name of the mountain on which Bacchus was said to have been nursed by the nymphs.

[2] See Ecclesiasticus, xiv. 18; Ps. ciii. 15.

[3] Son of Æolus, and founder of ancient Corinth (Ephyre).

Then call'd Ephyrè. Glaucus was his son,—
Great Glaucus, father of Bellerophon,[1]
Who o'er the sons of men in beauty shin'd,
Lov'd for that valor which preserves mankind.
Then mighty Prœtus Argos' scepter sway'd,
Whose hard commands Bellerophon obey'd.
With direful jealousy the monarch rag'd,
And the brave prince in numerous toils engag'd.
For him Antæa burn'd with ardent flame,
And strove to tempt him from the paths of fame;
In vain she tempted the relentless youth,
Endued with wisdom, sacred fear, and truth.
Fir'd at his scorn the queen to Prœtus goes,
And begs revenge for her pretended woes.
Incens'd he heard, resolving on his fate;
But hospitable laws restrain'd his hate.
To Lycia the devoted youth he sent,
With tablets seal'd, that told his dire intent.
Now bless'd by every power who guards the good,
The chief arrived at Xanthus'[2] silver flood;
There Lycia's monarch paid him honors due,
Nine days[3] he feasted, and nine bulls he slew.
But when the tenth bright morning orient glow'd,
The faithful youth his monarch's mandate show'd;
The fatal tablets, till that instant seal'd,

[1] A fabled hero of Corinth, who, having accidentally killed his brother, fled for protection to the court of his kinsman Prœtus, King of Argos. The latter's wife, Antæa, fell in love with him and, angered at his discouragement of her advances, accused him to the king of treachery. The laws of protection towards a guest restrained Prœtus from killing Bellerophon himself, but he sent him with a sealed message to king Iobates, begging the latter to do the deed for him. Iobates thereupon sent him to meet death by the performance of the direful tasks named in lines 219–234.

[2] Homer says that the Scamander was called Xanthus by the gods.

[3] Greek courtesy required an entertainment of many days before asking of a guest the meaning of his visit.

The deathful[1] secret to the king reveal'd.
First, dire Chimæra's conquest was enjoin'd
A mingled monster of no mortal kind!
Behind, a dragon's fiery tail was spread;
A goat's rough body bore a lion's head;
Her pitchy nostrils flaky flames expire;
Her gaping throat emits infernal fire.
"This pest he slaughter'd, (for he read the skies,
And trusted heaven's informing prodigies,)
Then met in arms the Solymæan[2] crew
(Fiercest of men), and those the warrior slew;
Next the bold Amazons'[3] whole force defied,
And conquer'd still, for Heaven was on his side.
"Nor ended here his toils: his Lycian foes,
At his return, a treacherous ambush rose,
With level'd spears along the winding shore;
There fell they breathless, and return'd no more.
"At length the monarch, with repentant grief,
Confess'd[4] the gods, and god-descended[5] chief;
His daughter gave, the stranger to detain,
With half the honors of his ample reign;
The Lycians grant a chosen space of ground,
With woods, with vineyards, and with harvests crown'd.
There long the chief his happy lot possess'd,
With two brave sons and one fair daughter bless'd;
But when at last, distracted in his mind,
Forsook by heaven, forsaking humankind,
Wide o'er the Aleian field[6] he chose to stray,
A long, forlorn, uncomfortable way!

[1] Because they ordered the hero's death.
[2] Referring to a people of Lycia.
[3] The Amazons were a fierce, warlike race of women.
[4] Recognized.
[5] According to some myths Bellerophon was the son of Neptune.
[6] The Aleian field ("plain of wandering") was in Cilicia in the southern part of Asia Minor.

Woes heap'd on woes consum'd his wasted heart:
His beauteous daughter fell by Phœbe's[1] dart;
His eldest born by raging Mars was slain,
In combat on the Solymæan plain.
Hippolochus surviv'd; from him I came,
The honor'd author of my birth and name.
By his decree I sought the Trojan town;
By his instructions learn to win renown,
To stand the first in worth as in command,
To add new honors to my native land,
Before my eyes my mighty sires to place,
And emulate the glories of our race."
He spoke, and transport fill'd Tydides' heart;
In earth the generous warrior fix'd his dart,
Then friendly, thus the Lycian prince address'd:
"Welcome, my brave hereditary guest!
Thus ever let us meet, with kind embrace,
Nor stain the sacred friendship of our race.
Know, chief, our grandsires have been guests of old,—
Œneus the strong, Bellerophon the bold;
Our ancient seat his honor'd presence grac'd,
Where twenty days in genial rites he pass'd.
The parting heroes mutual presents left;
A golden goblet was thy grandsire's gift;
Œneus a belt of matchless work bestow'd,
That rich with Tyrian dye[2] refulgent glow'd.
(This from his pledge I learn'd, which, safely stor'd
Among my treasures, still adorns my board;
For Tydeus left me young, when Thebè's wall
Beheld the sons of Greece untimely fall.[3])

[1] The moon.

[2] "Tyrian dye," i.e., a celebrated purple dye, an emblem of rank, prepared in ancient Tyre from several mollusks.

[3] In a war for the possession of the throne of Thebes, a famous Grecian city in the state of Bœotia, Tydeus was one of the seven leaders among whom the command was divided.

Mindful of this, in friendship let us join;
If Heaven our steps to foreign lands incline,
My guest in Argos thou, and I in Lycia thine.
Enough of Trojans to this lance shall yield
In the full harvest of yon ample field;
Enough of Greeks shall dye thy spear with gore;
But thou and Diomed be foes no more.
Now change we arms, and prove to either host
We guard the friendship of the line we boast."
  Thus having said, the gallant chiefs alight,
Their hands they join, their mutual faith they plight;
Brave Glaucus then each narrow thought resign'd,
(Jove warm'd his bosom, and enlarg'd his mind,)
For Diomed's brass arms, of mean device,
For which nine oxen paid (a vulgar price),
He gave his own, of gold divinely wrought,
A hundred beeves the shining purchase bought.[1]
  Meantime the guardian of the Trojan state,
Great Hector, enter'd at the Scæan gate.[2]
Beneath the beech tree's consecrated shades,
The Trojan matrons and the Trojan maids
Around him flock'd; all press'd with pious care
For husbands, brothers, sons, engag'd in war.
He bids the train in long procession go
And seek the gods, to avert the impending woe.
And now to Priam's stately courts he came,
Rais'd on arch'd columns of stupendous frame;
O'er these a range of marble structure runs,
The rich pavilions of his fifty sons,
In fifty chambers lodg'd; and rooms of state,
Oppos'd to those, where Priam's daughters sate.
Twelve domes for them and their lov'd spouses shone,
Of equal beauty, and of polish'd stone.

[1] The Greek words which tell of this bad bargain have passed into a proverb.
[2] The Scæan gate was the west gate of Troy.

Hither great Hector pass'd, nor pass'd unseen
Of royal Hecuba, his mother queen.
(With her Laodicè,[1] whose beauteous face
Surpass'd the nymphs of Troy's illustrious race.)
Long in a strict embrace she held her son,
And press'd his hand, and tender thus begun:
"O Hector! say, what great occasion calls
My son from fight, when Greece surrounds our walls?
Com'st thou to supplicate the almighty power
With lifted hands, from Ilion's lofty tower?
Stay, till I bring the cup with Bacchus crown'd,[2]
In Jove's high name, to sprinkle on the ground,
And pay due vows to all the gods around.
Then with a plenteous draught refresh thy soul,
And draw new spirits from the generous bowl;
Spent as thou art with long laborious fight,
The brave defender of thy country's right."
"Far hence be Bacchus' gifts, (the chief rejoin'd;)
Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unnerves the limbs, and dulls the noble mind.
Let chiefs abstain, and spare the sacred juice
To sprinkle to the gods, its better use.
By me that holy office were profan'd;
Ill fits it me, with human gore distain'd,
To the pure skies these horrid hands to raise,
Or offer heaven's great Sire polluted praise.
You, with your matrons, go! a spotless train,
And burn rich odors in Minerva's fane.
The largest mantle your full wardrobes hold,
Most priz'd for art, and labor'd o'er with gold,
Before the goddess' honor'd knees be spread,
And twelve young heifers to her altar led.

[1] One of Priam's daughters.

[2] "With Bacchus crowned," i.e., filled with wine, the gift of Bacchus (see Introduction, p. 8).

So may the power, aton'd by fervent prayer,
Our wives, our infants, and our city spare;
And far avert Tydides' wasteful ire,
Who mows whole troops, and makes all Troy retire.
Be this, O mother, your religious care;
I go to rouse soft Paris[1] to the war;
If yet not lost to all the sense of shame,
The recreant warrior hear the voice of fame.
Oh, would kind earth the hateful wretch embrace,
That pest of Troy, that ruin of our race!
Deep to the dark abyss might he descend,
Troy yet should flourish, and my sorrows end."
This heard, she gave command; and summon'd came
Each noble matron and illustrious dame.
The Phrygian queen to her rich wardrobe went,
Where treasur'd odors breath'd a costly scent.
There lay the vestures of no vulgar art,
Sidonian maids embroider'd every part,
Whom from soft Sidon youthful Paris bore,
With Helen touching on the Tyrian shore.[2]
Here, as the queen revolv'd with careful eyes
The various textures and the various dyes,
She chose a veil that shone superior far,
And glow'd refulgent as the morning star.
Herself with this the long procession leads;
The train majestically slow proceeds.
Soon as to Ilion's topmost tower they come,

[1] In his duel with Menelaus, described in Book III., Paris had been overcome. He was snatched away in a cloud by Venus, and now remained in his apartment.

[2] "Paris returned not directly to Troy after the rape of Helen, but fetched a compass, probably to avoid pursuit. He touched at Sidon, where he surprised the King of Phenicia by night, and carried off many of his treasures and captives, among which probably were these Sidonian women."— POPE. The Bible bears witness to the skill and wealth of the Sidonians (see I. Kings v. 6; Ezek. xxvii.).

And awful reach the high Palladian [1] dome,
Antenor's [2] consort, fair Theano, waits
As Pallas' priestess, and unbars the gates.
With hands uplifted and imploring eyes,
They fill the dome with supplicating cries.
The priestess then the shining veil displays,
Plac'd on Minerva's knees, and thus she prays:
"Oh awful goddess! ever-dreadful maid,
Troy's strong defense, unconquer'd Pallas, aid!
Break thou Tydides' spear, and let him fall
Prone on the dust before the Trojan wall!
So twelve young heifers, guiltless of the yoke,
Shall fill thy temple with a grateful smoke.
But thou, aton'd by penitence and prayer,
Ourselves, our infants, and our city spare!"
So pray'd the priestess in her holy fane;
So vow'd the matrons, but they vow'd in vain.
While these appear before the power with prayers,
Hector to Paris' lofty dome repairs.
Himself the mansion rais'd, from every part
Assembling architects of matchless art.
Near Priam's court and Hector's palace stands
The pompous structure, and the town commands.
A spear the hero bore of wondrous strength,
Of full ten cubits was the lance's length;
The steely point with golden ringlets join'd,
Before him brandish'd, at each motion shin'd.
Thus entering, in the glittering rooms he found
His brother chief, whose useless arms lay round,
His eyes delighting with their splendid show,
Brightening the shield, and polishing the bow.

[1] According to the myth, the Palladium, a wooden image of Minerva, fell from heaven upon the citadel of Troy, and became from that time until it was carried off by the Greeks, an assurance of the safety of the city.

[2] Antenor was Priam's companion and one of the wisest of the Trojans.

Beside him Helen with her virgins stands,
Guides their rich labors, and instructs their hands.
Him thus inactive, with an ardent look
The prince beheld, and high-resenting spoke:
"Thy hate to Troy, is this the time to show?
(O wretch ill-fated, and thy country's foe!)
Paris and Greece against us both conspire;
Thy close resentment[1] and their vengeful ire.
For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall,
Till heaps of dead alone defend her wall;
For thee the soldier bleeds, the matron mourns,
And wasteful war in all its fury burns.
Ungrateful man! deserves not this thy care,
Our troops to hearten, and our toils to share?
Rise, or behold the conquering flames ascend,
And all the Phrygian glories at an end."
"Brother, 'tis just, (replied the beauteous youth,)
Thy free remonstrance proves thy worth and truth;
Yet charge my absence less, O generous chief!
On hate to Troy, than conscious shame and grief.
Here, hid from human eyes, thy brother sate,
And mourn'd, in secret, his and Ilion's fate.
'Tis now enough; now glory spreads her charms,
And beauteous Helen calls her chief to arms.
Conquest to-day my happier sword may bless,
'Tis man's to fight, but Heaven's to give success.
But while I arm, contain thy ardent mind;
Or go, and Paris shall not lag behind."
He said, nor answer'd Priam's warlike son;
When Helen thus with lowly grace begun:
"Oh generous brother! (if the guilty dame
That caus'd these woes deserve a sister's name!)

[1] Against the Trojans. Hector interprets Paris's retirement from battle to be from anger, and not from the victory Menelaus had won or from his love of indolence.

Would Heaven, ere all these dreadful deeds were done,
The day that show'd me to the golden sun
Had seen my death! why did not whirlwinds bear
The fatal infant to the fowls of air?
Why sunk I not beneath the whelming tide,
And midst the roarings of the waters died?
Heaven fill'd up all my ills, and I accurs'd
Bore all, and Paris of those ills the worst.
Helen at least a braver spouse might claim,
Warm'd with some virtue, some regard of fame!
Now tir'd with toils, thy fainting limbs recline,
With toils sustain'd for Paris' sake and mine.
The gods have link'd our miserable doom,
Our present woe, and infamy to come;
Wide shall it spread, and last through ages long,
Example sad! and theme of future song."
The chief replied: "This time forbids to rest;
The Trojan bands, by hostile fury press'd,
Demand their Hector, and his arm require;
The combat urges, and my soul's on fire.
Urge thou thy knight to march where glory calls,
And timely join me, ere I leave the walls.
Ere yet I mingle in the direful fray,
My wife, my infant, claim a moment's stay;
This day (perhaps the last that sees me here)
Demands a parting word, a tender tear.
This day, some god who hates our Trojan land
May vanquish Hector by a Grecian hand."
He said, and pass'd with sad presaging heart
To seek his spouse, his soul's far dearer part;
At home he sought her, but he sought in vain;
She, with one maid of all her menial train,
Had hence retir'd; and with her second joy,
The young Astyanax, the hope of Troy,
Pensive she stood on Ilion's towery height,
Beheld the war, and sicken'd at the sight;

There her sad eyes in vain her lord explore,[1]
Or weep the wounds her bleeding country bore.
But he who found not whom his soul desir'd,
Whose virtue charm'd him as her beauty fir'd,
Stood in the gates, and ask'd what way she bent
Her parting step? If to the fane she went,
Where late the mourning matrons made resort;
Or sought her sisters in the Trojan court?
"Not to the court, (replied the attendant train,)
Nor mix'd with matrons to Minerva's fane;
To Ilion's steepy tower she bent her way,
To mark the fortunes of the doubtful day.
Troy fled, she heard, before the Grecian sword;
She heard, and trembled for her absent lord;
Distracted with surprise, she seem'd to fly,
Fear on her cheek, and sorrow in her eye.
The nurse attended with her infant boy,
The young Astyanax, the hope of Troy."
Hector this heard, return'd without delay;
Swift through the town he trod his former way,
Through streets of palaces, and walks of state,
And met the mourner at the Scæan gate.[2]
With haste to meet him sprung the joyful fair,
His blameless wife, Aëtion's wealthy heir;
(Cilician Thebè great Aëtion sway'd,
And Hippoplacus'[3] wide extended shade:)
The nurse stood near, in whose embraces press'd,
His only hope hung smiling at her breast,

[1] Search for.

[2] Honor and duty led Hector towards the field of battle after his failure to find Andromache at home. They met by chance. "In the present episode of their parting, Homer has assembled all that love, grief, and compassion could inspire."— POPE.

[3] Hippoplacus means literally "under Mt. Placus." According to Homer this was a mountain at the foot of which Thebè was situated (see Note 3, p 30), but the mountain is not known from other sources.

Whom each soft charm and early grace adorn,
Fair as the newborn star that gilds the morn.
To this lov'd infant Hector gave the name
Scamandrius, from Scamander's honor'd stream;
Astyanax[1] the Trojans call'd the boy,
From his great father, the defense of Troy.
Silent the warrior smil'd, and pleas'd, resign'd
To tender passions all his mighty mind;
His beauteous princess cast a mournful look,
Hung on his hand, and then dejected spoke;
Her bosom labor'd with a boding sigh,
And the big tear stood trembling in her eye:
"Too daring prince! ah, whither dost thou run?
Ah, too forgetful of thy wife and son!
And think'st thou not how wretched we shall be,
A widow I, a helpless orphan he?
For sure such courage length of life denies,
And thou must fall, thy virtue's sacrifice.
Greece in her single heroes strove in vain;
Now hosts oppose thee, and thou must be slain.—
O grant me, gods, ere Hector meets his doom,
All I can ask of Heaven, an early tomb!
So shall my days in one sad tenor run,
And end with sorrows as they first begun.
No parent now remains my griefs to share,
No father's aid, no mother's tender care.
The fierce Achilles wrapt our walls in fire,
Laid Thebè waste, and slew my warlike sire![2]
His fate compassion in the victor bred;
Stern as he was, he yet rever'd the dead,
His radiant arms preserv'd from hostile spoil,

[1] Lord, or defender, of the city.

[2] "Nothing was more natural in Andromache than to recollect her past calamities in order to represent her present distresses to Hector in a stronger light."— POPE.

And laid him decent on the funeral pile;
Then rais'd a mountain where his bones were burn'd;
The mountain nymphs the rural tomb adorn'd;
Jove's sylvan daughters bade their elms bestow
A barren [1] shade, and in his honor grow.
"By the same arm my seven brave brothers fell;
In one sad day beheld the gates of hell; [2]
While the fat herds and snowy flocks they fed,
Amid their fields the hapless heroes bled!
My mother liv'd to wear the victor's bands,
The queen of Hippoplacia's [3] sylvan lands;
Redeem'd too late, she scarce beheld again
Her pleasing empire and her native plain,
When ah! oppress'd by life-consuming woe,
She fell a victim to Diana's bow.[4]
"Yet while my Hector still survives, I see
My father, mother, brethren, all, in thee.
Alas! my parents, brothers, kindred, all
Once more will perish, if my Hector fall;
Thy wife, thy infant, in thy danger share;
Oh, prove a husband's and a father's care!
That quarter most the skillful Greeks annoy,
Where yon wild fig trees join the wall of Troy; [5]
Thou, from this tower defend the important post;
There Agamemnon points his dreadful host;
That pass Tydides, Ajax, strive to gain,
And there the vengeful Spartan fires his train.
Thrice our bold foes the fierce attack have given,
Or led by hopes, or dictated from heaven.

[1] Only fruitless trees were planted by tombs.

[2] Hell has here its original meaning, the unseen place or god, as the Greek Hades. [3] See Note 3, p. 58.

[4] "The Greeks ascribed all sudden deaths of women to Diana."—POPE.

[5] "The artifice Andromache here uses to detain Hector in Troy is very beautifully imagined."—POPE.

Let others in the field their arms employ,
But stay my Hector here, and guard his Troy."
The chief replied: "That post shall be my care,
Not that alone, but all the works of war.
How would the sons of Troy, in arms renown'd,
And Troy's proud dames, whose garments sweep the ground
Attaint[1] the luster of my former name,
Should Hector basely quit the field of fame?
My early youth was bred to martial pains,
My soul impels me to the embattled plains!
Let me be foremost to defend the throne,
And guard my father's glories, and my own.
"Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates!
(How my heart trembles while my tongue relates!)
The day when thou, imperial Troy! must bend,
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end.
And yet no dire presage so wounds my mind,—
My mother's death, the ruin of my kind,
Not Priam's hoary hairs defil'd with gore,
Not all my brothers gasping on the shore,—
As thine, Andromache! Thy griefs I dread;
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led!
In Argive[2] looms our battles to design,
And woes, of which so large a part was thine!
To bear the victor's hard commands, or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's[3] spring.
There while you groan beneath the load of life,
They cry, 'Behold the mighty Hector's wife!'
Some haughty Greek, who lives thy tears to see,
Imbitters all thy woes, by naming me.
The thoughts of glory past, and present shame,
A thousand griefs shall waken at the name!

[1] Cloud with infamy; stain.
[2] Argos was subject to Agamemnon.
[3] A fountain in Thessaly, where Andromache would serve Achilles.

May I lie cold before that dreadful day,
Press'd with a load of monumental clay!
Thy Hector, wrapt in everlasting sleep,
Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep."
Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy
Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.[1]
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scar'd at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smil'd,
And Hector hasted to relieve his child,
The glittering terrors from his brows unbound,
And plac'd the beaming helmet on the ground;
Then kiss'd the child, and, lifting high in air,
Thus to the gods preferr'd a father's prayer:
"O thou! whose glory fills the ethereal throne,
And all ye deathless powers! protect my son!
Grant him, like me, to purchase just renown,
To guard the Trojans, to defend the crown,
Against his country's foes the war to wage,
And rise the Hector of the future age!
So when triumphant from successful toils
Of heroes slain, he bears the reeking spoils,
Whole hosts may hail him with deserv'd acclaim,
And say, 'This chief transcends his father's fame;
While pleas'd amidst the general shouts of Troy,
His mother's conscious heart o'erflows with joy."
He spoke, and fondly gazing on her charms,
Restor'd the pleasing burden to her arms;
Soft on her fragrant breast the babe she laid,
Hush'd to repose, and with a smile survey'd.
The troubled pleasure soon chastis'd by fear,

[1] "There never was a finer piece of painting than this. . . . All these are but small circumstances, but so artfully chosen that every reader immediately feels the force of them, and represents the whole in the utmost liveliness to his imagination."—POPE.

She mingled with a smile a tender tear.
The soften'd chief with kind compassion view'd,
And dried the falling drops, and thus pursued:
"Andromache! my soul's far better part,
Why with untimely sorrows heaves thy heart?
No hostile hand can antedate my doom,
Till fate condemns me to the silent tomb.
Fix'd is the term to all the race of earth,[1]
And such the hard condition of our birth;
No force can then resist, no flight can save,
All sink alike, the fearful and the brave.
No more — but hasten to thy tasks at home,
There guide the spindle, and direct the loom;
Me glory summons to the martial scene,
The field of combat is the sphere for men.
Where heroes war, the foremost place I claim,
The first in danger as the first in fame."
Thus having said, the glorious chief resumes
His towery helmet, black with shading plumes.
His princess parts with a prophetic sigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye
That stream'd at every look; then, moving slow,
Sought her own palace, and indulg'd her woe.
There, while her tears deplor'd the godlike man,
Through all her train the soft infection ran;
The pious maids their mingled sorrows shed,
And mourn the living Hector, as the dead.
But now, no longer deaf to honor's call,
Forth issues Paris from the palace wall.
In brazen arms that cast a gleamy[2] ray,
Swift through the town the warrior bends his way.
The wanton courser[3] thus, with reins unbound,

[1] An ancient opinion, which in some faiths still survives, that the length of life is appointed to each one at birth.

[2] Flashing. [3] Swift horse.

Breaks from his stall, and beats the trembling ground;
Pamper'd and proud, he seeks the wonted tides,
And laves in height of blood[1] his shining sides;
His head now freed, he tosses to the skies;
His mane dishevel'd o'er his shoulders flies;
He snuffs the females in the distant plain,
And springs, exulting, to his fields again.
With equal triumph, sprightly, bold, and gay,
In arms refulgent as the god of day,
The son of Priam, glorying in his might,
Rush'd forth with Hector to the fields of fight.
And now, the warriors passing on the way,
The graceful Paris first excus'd his stay.
To whom the noble Hector thus replied:
"O chief! in blood, and now in arms, allied!
Thy power in war with justice none contest;[2]
Known is thy courage, and thy strength confess'd.
What pity sloth should seize a soul so brave,
Or godlike Paris live a woman's slave!
My heart weeps blood at what the Trojans say,
And hopes thy deeds shall wipe the stain away.
Haste then, in all their glorious labors share,
For much they suffer, for thy sake, in war.
These ills shall cease, whene'er by Jove's decree
We crown the bowl to heaven and liberty;
While the proud foe his frustrate triumphs mourns,
And Greece indignant through her seas returns."

[1] "In height of blood," i.e., in his excess of strength and warmth.

[2] Hector would strengthen Paris by well-meaning praise; his native valor had been overcome by love of pleasure.

BOOK XXII.[1]

THE DEATH OF HECTOR.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Trojans being safe within the walls, Hector only stays to oppose Achilles. Priam [his father] is struck at his approach, and tries to persuade his son to reënter the town. Hecuba [his mother] joins her entreaties, but in vain. Hector consults within himself what measures to take; but at the advance of Achilles, his resolution fails him, and he flies. Achilles pursues him thrice round the walls of Troy. The gods debate concerning the fate of Hector; at length Minerva descends to the aid of Achilles. She deludes Hector in the shape of Deïphobus; he stands the combat, and is slain. Achilles drags the dead body at his chariot in the sight of Priam and Hecuba. Their lamentations, tears, and despair. Their cries reach the ears of Andromache, who, ignorant of this, was retired into the inner part of the palace. She mounts up to the walls, and beholds her dead husband. She swoons at the spectacle. Her excess of grief and lamentation.

The thirtieth day still continues. The scene lies under the walls, and on the battlements of Troy.

THUS to their bulwarks, smit with panic fear,
The herded Ilions rush like driven deer;
There safe they wipe the briny drops away,[2]
And drown in bowls the labors of the day.
Close to the walls, advancing o'er the fields
Beneath one roof of well compacted[3] shields,
March, bending on, the Greeks' embodied powers,
Far stretching in the shade of Trojan towers.

[1] In the battles of which the poet sings between the sixth and the twenty-second books the Grecians were badly routed, but Achilles refused to come to their aid. At last the Trojans prepared to set fire to the Grecian camp. It was at this time that Patroclus, clad in Achilles's armor, led the Myrmidons to fight, and was slain by Hector. Achilles, determined to avenge his friend's death, returned to battle in armor forged for him by Vulcan. A battle ensued in which the Trojans were defeated. They retreated to Troy and closed the gates.

[2] "Getting off the mingled dust and sweat."—CHAPMAN.

[3] "Setting shields to shoulders," says Homer.

Great Hector singly stay'd, chain'd down by fate,
There fix'd he stood before the Scæan gate;
Still his bold arms determin'd to employ,
The guardian still of long-defended Troy.
  Apollo now to tir'd Achilles turns
(The power confess'd in all his glory burns):[1]
"And what (he cries) has Peleus' son in view,
With mortal speed a godhead[2] to pursue?
For not to thee to know the gods is given,
Unskill'd to trace the latent marks of heaven.
What boots thee now that Troy forsook the plain?
Vain thy past labor, and thy present vain;
Safe in their walls are now her troops bestow'd,
While here thy frantic rage attacks a god."
  The chief incens'd: "Too partial god of day!
To check my conquests in the middle way.[3]
How few in Ilion else had refuge found!
What gasping numbers now had bit the ground!
Thou robb'st me of a glory justly mine,
Powerful of godhead, and of fraud divine![4]
Mean fame, alas! for one of heavenly strain,
To cheat a mortal who repines in vain."
  Then to the city, terrible and strong,
With high and haughty steps he tower'd along;
So the proud courser, victor of the prize,
To the near goal with double ardor flies.
Him, as he blazing shot across the field,
The careful eyes of Priam first beheld.
Not half so dreadful rises to the sight,
Through the thick gloom of some tempestuous night,

1 Pope means that Apollo's bright glory confesses or makes known his power.
2 Refers here to Apollo.
3 "In the middle way," i.e., in the midst of my course.
4 "Powerful of godhead," etc., i.e., powerful in thy divine nature and in cheating me of my victory through thy divinity.

Orion's dog[1] (the year when autumn weighs),
And o'er the feebler stars exerts his rays;
Terrific glory! for his burning breath
Taints the red air with fevers, plagues, and death.
So flam'd his fiery mail. Then wept the sage;[2]
He strikes his reverend head, now white with age;
He lifts his wither'd arms; obtests[3] the skies;
He calls his much-lov'd son with feeble cries.
The son, resolv'd Achilles' force to dare,
Full at the Scæan gates expects the war;
While the sad father on the rampart stands,
And thus adjures him with extended hands:
"Ah stay not, stay not, guardless and alone,
Hector! my lov'd, my dearest, bravest son!
Methinks already I behold thee slain,
And stretch'd beneath that fury of the plain.—
Implacable Achilles! might'st thou be
To all the gods no dearer than to me!
Thee, vultures wild should scatter round the shore,
And bloody dogs grow fiercer from thy gore.
How many valiant sons I late enjoy'd,
Valiant in vain! by thy curs'd arm destroy'd;
Or, worse than slaughter'd, sold in distant isles
To shameful bondage, and unworthy toils.
Two, while I speak, my eyes in vain explore,
Two from one mother sprung,—my Polydore,
And lov'd Lycaon,—now perhaps no more![4]
Oh! if in yonder hostile camp they live,
What heaps of gold, what treasures would I give!

[1] The constellation of Canis Major, of which Sirius, the Dog Star, is the brightest star. Sirius was supposed to be most malignant when it rose at the same time as the sun. This was in "dog days," the part of the year "when autumn weighs."

[2] Priam. [3] Calls earnestly upon.

[4] The death of Polydorus (Polydore) is described in the last part of the twentieth book; that of Lycaon in the first part of the twenty-first book.

(Their grandsire's[1] wealth, by right of birth their own,
Consign'd his daughter with Lelegia's throne.)
But if (which Heaven forbid) already lost,
All pale they wander on the Stygian[2] coast;
What sorrows then must their sad mother know,
What anguish I? unutterable woe!
Yet less that anguish,—less to her, to me,
Less to all Troy,—if not depriv'd of thee.
Yet shun Achilles! enter yet the wall;
And spare thyself, thy father,—spare us all!
Save thy dear life; or, if a soul so brave
Neglect that thought, thy dearer glory save.
Pity, while yet I live, these silver hairs;
While yet thy father feels the woes he bears,
Yet curs'd with sense! a wretch, whom in his rage
(All trembling on the verge of helpless age)
Great Jove has plac'd,[3] sad spectacle of pain!
The bitter dregs of fortune's cup to drain;
To fill with scenes of death his closing eyes,
And number all his days by miseries!
My heroes slain, my bridal bed o'erturn'd,
My daughters ravish'd, and my city burn'd,
My bleeding infants dash'd against the floor;—
These I have yet to see, perhaps yet more!
Perhaps even I, reserv'd by angry fate,
The last sad relic of my ruin'd state,
(Dire pomp of sovereign wretchedness!) must fall,
And stain the pavement of my regal hall;
Where famish'd dogs, late guardians of my door,

[1] Altes, King of the Leleges, who dwelt in Pedasus at the foot of Mt. Ida. His daughter, the mother of the two sons who are mentioned, was named Laothoe.

[2] Belonging to the river Styx, which, in ancient legend, flowed round the lower world.

[3] "Whom in his rage," etc., i.e., whom, trembling on the verge of age, Jove in his rage has placed; etc.

Shall lick their mangled master's spatter'd gore.
Yet for my sons I thank ye, gods! 'tis well;
Well have they perish'd, for in fight they fell.
Who dies in youth and vigor, dies the best,
Struck through with wounds, all honest on the breast.
But when the fates, in fullness of their rage,
Spurn the hoar head of unresisting age,
In dust the reverend lineaments deform,
And pour to dogs the lifeblood scarcely warm,—
This, this is misery! the last, the worst
That man can feel! man, fated to be curs'd!"
He said, and acting what no words could say,
Rent from his head the silver locks away.
With him the mournful mother bears a part;
Yet all her sorrows turn not Hector's heart.
The zone unbrac'd,[1] her bosom she display'd;
And thus, fast falling the salt tears, she said:
"Have mercy on me, O my son! revere
The words of age; attend a parent's prayer!
If ever thee in these fond arms I press'd,
Or still'd thy infant clamors at this breast;
Ah do not thus our helpless years forego,
But, by our walls secur'd, repel the foe.
Against his rage if singly thou proceed,
Should'st thou, (but Heaven avert it!) should'st thou bleed,
Nor must thy corse lie honor'd on the bier,
Nor spouse, nor mother, grace thee with a tear!
Far from our pious rites those dear remains
Must feast the vultures on the naked plains."
So they,[2] while down their cheeks the torrents roll;
But fix'd remains the purpose of his soul;
Resolv'd he stands, and with a fiery glance

[1] "The zone unbrac'd," i.e., the girdle unfastened. Hecuba loosened her robe by taking out the brooch which fastened it on the right shoulder.

[2] Supply "spoke."

Expects the hero's terrible advance.
So, roll'd up in his den, the swelling snake
Beholds the traveler approach the brake,
When, fed with noxious herbs,[1] his turgid veins
Have gather'd half the poisons of the plains;
He burns, he stiffens with collected ire,
And his red eyeballs glare with living fire.
Beneath a turret, on his shield reclin'd,
He stood, and question'd thus his mighty mind:
"Where lies my way? to enter in the wall?
Honor and shame the ungenerous thought recall.
Shall proud Polydamas[2] before the gate
Proclaim his counsels are obey'd too late,
Which timely follow'd but the former night,
What numbers had been sav'd by Hector's flight?
That wise advice rejected with disdain,
I feel my folly in my people slain.
Methinks my suffering country's voice I hear,
But most her worthless sons insult my ear,
On my rash courage charge the chance of war,
And blame those virtues which they cannot share.
No,—if I e'er return, return I must
Glorious, my country's terror laid in dust;
Or if I perish, let her see me fall
In field at least, and fighting for her wall.—
And yet, suppose these measures I forego,[3]
Approach unarm'd, and parley with the foe,

[1] The poison of the snake was supposed to come from the deadly plants which he had eaten.

[2] In Book XVIII. Hector's friend Polydamas, a Trojan hero, advises that the army return to Troy and that the city be defended from within its walls; but this advice Hector disdains.

[3] "Here is a very beautiful break in the middle of this speech," says Pope. "Hector's mind fluctuates every way; he is calling a council in his own breast, and consulting what method to pursue; he doubts if he should not propose terms of peace to Achilles and grant him very large concessions."

The warrior-shield, the helm, and lance, lay down,
And treat on terms of peace to save the town;
The wife[1] withheld, the treasure[2] ill-detain'd,
(Cause of the war, and grievance of the land,)
With honorable justice to restore;
And add half Ilion's yet remaining store,
Which Troy shall, sworn, produce; that injur'd Greece
May share our wealth, and leave our walls in peace.—
But why this thought? Unarm'd if I should go,
What hope of mercy from this vengeful foe,
But womanlike to fall, and fall without a blow?
We greet not here, as man conversing man,
Met at an oak,[3] or journeying o'er a plain;
No season now for calm familiar talk,
Like youths and maidens in an evening walk;
War is our business, but to whom is given
To die, or triumph,—that, determine Heaven!"
Thus pondering,[4] like a god the Greek drew nigh;
His dreadful plumage nodded from on high;
The Pelian javelin, in his better hand,
Shot trembling rays that glitter'd o'er the land;
And on his breast the beamy[5] splendor shone,
Like Jove's own lightning, or the rising sun.
As Hector sees, unusual terrors rise;
Struck by some god, he fears, recedes, and flies;
He leaves the gates, he leaves the wall behind;
Achilles follows like the winged wind.
Thus at the panting dove a falcon flies
(The swiftest racer of the liquid[6] skies);
Just when he holds, or thinks he holds his prey,
Obliquely wheeling through the aërial way,

[1] Helen. [2] The treasure Paris carried to Troy from Greece.
[3] "As man," etc., i.e., as a man talks with a man when they meet under an oak. [4] "Thus pondering," i.e., to him thus pondering.
[5] Radiant; shining. [6] Clear; transparent.

With open beak and shrilling cries he springs,
And aims his claws, and shoots upon his wings,—
No less fore-right[1] the rapid chase they held,
One urg'd by fury, one by fear impell'd;
Now circling round the walls their course maintain,
Where the high watchtower overlooks the plain;
Now where the fig trees spread their umbrage[2] broad,
(A wider compass,) smoke along the road.
Next by Scamander's double source[3] they bound,
Where two fam'd fountains burst the parted ground;
This hot through scorching clefts is seen to rise,
With exhalations steaming to the skies;
That the green banks in summer's heat o'erflows,
Like crystal clear, and cold as winter snows;
Each gushing fount a marble cistern fills,
Whose polish'd bed receives the falling rills;
Where Trojan dames (ere yet alarm'd by Greece)
Wash'd their fair garments in the days of peace.[4]
By these they pass'd, one chasing, one in flight
(The mighty fled pursued by stronger might);
Swift was the course; no vulgar prize they play,
No vulgar victim must reward the day,
Such as in races crown the speedy strife;
The prize contended was great Hector's life.
As when some hero's funerals[5] are decreed
In grateful honor of the mighty dead,
Where high rewards the vigorous youth inflame
(Some golden tripod or some lovely dame),

[1] Straightforward; onward.

[2] Shade. A fig tree, one of the landmarks about Troy, is mentioned in other books of the Iliad.

[3] The sources of the Scamander are on Mt. Ida, about twenty miles from Troy. Homer takes a poet's license in bringing them nearer.

[4] Labor now deemed menial was in heroic times more rightly estimated. In the Iliad women of dignity are often engaged in weaving their garments.

[5] Funeral games in honor of a dead hero are often mentioned by Homer.

The panting coursers swiftly turn the goal,
And with them turns the rais'd spectator's soul;
Thus three times round the Trojan wall they fly.
The gazing gods lean forward from the sky;[1]
To whom, while eager on the chase they look,
The Sire of mortals and immortals spoke:
"Unworthy sight! the man belov'd of heaven,
Behold, inglorious round yon city driven!
My heart partakes the generous Hector's pain;
Hector, whose zeal whole hecatombs has slain,
Whose grateful fumes the gods receiv'd with joy,
From Ida's summits,[2] and the towers of Troy.
Now see him flying, to his fears resign'd,
And fate, and fierce Achilles, close behind.
Consult, ye powers! ('tis worthy your debate)
Whether to snatch him from impending fate,
Or let him bear, by stern Pelides slain,
(Good as he is) the lot impos'd on man."
Then Pallas thus: "Shall he whose vengeance forms
The forky bolt, and blackens heaven with storms,
Shall he prolong one Trojan's forfeit[3] breath?
A man, a mortal, preordain'd to death!
And will no murmurs fill the courts above?
No gods indignant blame their partial Jove?"
"Go then (return'd the Sire) without delay,
Exert thy will; I give the Fates their way."
Swift at the mandate pleas'd Tritonia[4] flies,
And stoops[5] impetuous from the cleaving skies.
As through the forest, o'er the vale and lawn,
The well-breath'd beagle[6] drives the flying fawn,

[1] "The death of Hector being the chief action of the poem," says Pope, "Homer assembles the gods and calls a council in heaven concerning it."
[2] The custom was to sacrifice in high places (see Deut. xii. 2).
[3] Forfeited. [4] Trito or Tritogenia, a surname of Minerva or Athene.
[5] Stoops to combat. [6] A small hunting hound.

In vain he tries the covert of the brakes,
Or deep beneath the trembling thicket shakes;
Sure of the vapor[1] in the tainted dews,
The certain hound his various maze pursues;—
Thus step by step, where'er the Trojan wheel'd,
There swift Achilles compass'd round the field.
Oft as to reach the Dardan gates he bends,
And hopes the assistance of his pitying friends,
(Whose showering arrows, as he cours'd below,
From the high turrets might oppress the foe,)
So oft Achilles turns him to the plain;
He eyes the city, but he eyes in vain.
As men in slumbers seem with speedy pace,
One to pursue, and one to lead the chase,
Their sinking limbs the fancied course forsake,
Nor this can fly, nor that can overtake;
No less the laboring heroes pant and strain,
While that but flies, and this pursues in vain.
What god, O muse, assisted Hector's force
With fate itself so long to hold the course?
Phœbus it was; who, in his latest hour,
Endued his knees with strength, his nerves with power;
And great Achilles, lest some Greek's advance
Should snatch the glory from his lifted lance,
Sign'd to the troops to yield his foe the way,
And leave untouch'd the honors of the day.
Jove lifts the golden balances,[2] that show
The fates of mortal men, and things below;
Here each contending hero's lot he tries,
And weighs, with equal hand, their destinies.
Low sinks the scale surcharg'd with Hector's fate;
Heavy with death it sinks, and hell[3] receives the weight.

[1] Scent.

[2] Jove weighs in his scales the fates of the two heroes.

[3] In the original "the house of Hades;" that is, the unseen place.

Then Phœbus left him.[1] Fierce Minerva flies
To stern Pelides, and triumphing, cries:
"O lov'd of Jove! this day our labors cease,
And conquest blazes with full beams on Greece.
Great Hector falls; that Hector fam'd so far,
Drunk with renown, insatiable of war,
Falls by thy hand, and mine! nor force, nor flight,
Shall more avail him, nor his god of light.
See, where in vain he[2] supplicates above,
Roll'd at the feet of unrelenting Jove.
Rest here; myself will lead the Trojan on,
And urge to meet the fate he cannot shun."
Her voice divine the chief with joyful mind
Obey'd, and rested, on his lance reclin'd,
While like Deïphobus[3] the martial dame,
(Her face, her gesture, and her arms the same,)
In show an aid, by hapless Hector's side
Approach'd, and greets him thus with voice belied:
"Too long, O Hector! have I borne the sight
Of this distress, and sorrow'd in thy flight.
It fits us now a noble stand to make,
And here, as brothers, equal fates partake."
Then he: "O prince! allied in blood and fame,
Dearer than all that own a brother's name,
Of all that Hecuba to Priam bore;
Long tried, long lov'd,—much lov'd, but honor'd more,
Since you of all our numerous race alone
Defend my life, regardless of your own."
Again the goddess: "Much my father's prayer,
And much my mother's, press'd me to forbear;

[1] "This is a very beautiful and poetical manner of saying that Apollo or destiny forsakes him."— POPE.

[2] Phœbus Apollo.

[3] Minerva, to deceive Hector, takes the guise of Deïphobus, a Trojan warrior whose prowess is described in Book XIII.

My friends embrac'd my knees, adjur'd[1] my stay,
But stronger love impell'd, and I obey.
Come then, the glorious conflict let us try,
Let the steel sparkle, and the javelin fly;
Or[2] let us stretch Achilles on the field,
Or to his arm our bloody trophies yield."
Fraudful she said, then swiftly march'd before;
The Dardan hero shuns his foe no more.
Sternly they met. The silence Hector broke;
His dreadful plumage nodded as he spoke:
"Enough, O son of Peleus! Troy has view'd
Her walls thrice circled, and her chief pursued.
But now some god within me bids me try
Thine, or my fate: I kill thee, or I die.
Yet on the verge of battle let us stay,
And for a moment's space suspend the day;
Let heaven's high powers be call'd to arbitrate
The just conditions of this stern debate,
(Eternal witnesses of all below,
And faithful guardians of the treasur'd vow!)
To them I swear: if, victor in the strife,
Jove by these hands shall shed thy noble life,
No vile dishonor shall thy corse pursue;
Stripp'd of its arms alone (the conqueror's due),
The rest to Greece uninjur'd I'll restore;
Now plight thy mutual oath, I ask no more."[3]
"Talk not of oaths, (the dreadful chief replies,
While anger flash'd from his disdainful eyes,)
Detested as thou art, and ought to be,
Nor oath nor pact[4] Achilles plights with thee.

[1] Earnestly commanded.
[2] Either.
[3] Pope says that the speech of Hector is "full of courage, but mixed with humanity; that of Achilles, of resentment and arrogance."
[4] Compact; agreement.

Such pacts as lambs and rabid wolves combine,
Such leagues as men and furious lions join,
To such I call the gods! one constant state
Of lasting rancor and eternal hate;
No thought but rage, and never-ceasing strife,
Till death extinguish rage, and thought, and life.
Rouse then thy forces this important hour,
Collect thy soul, and call forth all thy power.
No further subterfuge, no further chance;
'Tis Pallas, Pallas gives thee to my lance.
Each Grecian ghost, by thee depriv'd of breath,
Now hovers round, and calls thee to thy death."
He spoke, and launch'd his javelin at the foe;
But Hector shunn'd the meditated blow;
He stoop'd, while o'er his head the flying spear
Sang innocent, and spent its force in air.
Minerva watch'd it falling on the land,
Then drew,[1] and gave to great Achilles' hand,
Unseen of Hector, who, elate with joy,
Now shakes his lance, and braves the dread of Troy.
"The life you boasted to that javelin given,
Prince! you have miss'd. My fate depends on Heaven,
To thee, presumptous as thou art, unknown,
Or what must prove my fortune, or thy own.
Boasting is but an art, our fears to blind,
And with false terrors sink another's mind.
But know, whatever fate I am to try,
By no dishonest wound shall Hector die.
I shall not fall a fugitive at least;
My soul shall bravely issue from my breast.
But first, try thou my arm; and may this dart
End all my country's woes, deep buried in thy heart."
The weapon flew, its course unerring held,
Unerring, but the heavenly shield repell'd

[1] Drew it back.

The mortal dart; resulting[1] with a bound
From off the ringing orb, it struck the ground.
Hector beheld his javelin fall in vain,
Nor other lance, nor other hope remain;
He calls Deïphobus, demands a spear—
In vain, for no Deïphobus was there.
All comfortless he stands; then, with a sigh:
"'Tis so—Heaven wills it, and my hour is nigh!
I deem'd Deïphobus had heard my call,
But he secure lies guarded in the wall.
A god deceiv'd me;—Pallas, 'twas thy deed;
Death and black fate approach! 'tis I must bleed.
No refuge now, no succor from above,
Great Jove deserts me, and the son of Jove,
Propitious once, and kind! Then welcome fate!
'Tis true I perish, yet I perish great;
Yet in a mighty deed I shall expire,
Let future ages hear it, and admire!"
Fierce, at the word, his weighty sword he drew,
And, all collected, on Achilles flew.
So Jove's bold bird,[2] high balanc'd in the air,
Stoops from the clouds to truss[3] the quivering hare.
Nor less Achilles his fierce soul prepares;
Before his breast the flaming shield he bears,
Refulgent orb! above his fourfold cone[4]
The gilded horsehair sparkled in the sun,
Nodding at every step, (Vulcanian frame!)
And as he mov'd, his figure seem'd on flame.
As radiant Hesper[5] shines with keener light,
Far beaming o'er the silver host of night,
When all the starry train emblaze the sphere,—

[1] Resulting has here the original meaning of the Latin word *resilire* ("leaping back") from which it is derived.

[2] The eagle.

[3] Seize and hold firmly.

[4] Helmet.

[5] The evening star.

So shone the point of great Achilles' spear.
In his right hand he waves the weapon round,
Eyes the whole man, and meditates the wound;
But the rich mail Patroclus lately wore
Securely cas'd the warrior's body o'er.[1]
One space at length he spies, to let in fate,
Where, 'twixt the neck and throat, the jointed plate
Gave entrance; through that penetrable part
Furious he drove the well directed dart;
Nor pierc'd the windpipe yet, nor took the power
Of speech, unhappy! from thy dying hour;
Prone on the field the bleeding warrior lies,
While, thus triumphing, stern Achilles cries:
"At last is Hector stretch'd upon the plain,
Who fear'd no vengeance for Patroclus slain.
Then, prince! you should have fear'd, what now you feel;
Achilles absent was Achilles still.
Yet a short space the great avenger stay'd,
Then low in dust thy strength and glory laid.
Peaceful he sleeps, with all our rites adorn'd,
Forever honor'd, and forever mourn'd;
While cast to all the rage of hostile power,
Thee birds shall mangle, and the gods devour."
Then Hector, fainting at the approach of death:
"By thy own soul! by those who gave thee breath!
By all the sacred prevalence[2] of prayer,—
Ah, leave me not for Grecian dogs to tear!
The common rites of sepulture bestow,
To soothe a father's and a mother's woe;
Let their large gifts procure an urn at least,
And Hector's ashes in his country rest."
"No, wretch accurs'd!" relentless he replies;

[1] Hector wore as his spoil Achilles's armor, which he had taken from Patroclus's body. The parts did not exactly fit Hector.

[2] Influence; efficacy.

(Flames, as he spoke, shot flashing from his eyes;)
Not those who gave me breath should bid me spare,
Nor all the sacred prevalence of prayer.
Could I myself the bloody banquet join![1]
No—to the dogs that carcass I resign.
Should Troy, to bribe me, bring forth all her store,
And giving thousands, offer thousands more;
Should Dardan Priam, and his weeping dame,
Drain their whole realm to buy one funeral flame,—
Their Hector on the pile they should not see,
Nor rob the vultures of one limb of thee."
Then thus the chief his dying accents drew:
"Thy rage, implacable! too well I knew;
The Furies[2] that relentless breast have steel'd,
And curs'd thee with a heart that cannot yield.
Yet think, a day will come when fate's decree
And angry gods shall wreak this wrong on thee;
Phœbus and Paris shall avenge my fate,
And stretch thee here before the Scæan gate."[3]
He ceas'd. The Fates suppress'd his laboring breath,
And his eyes stiffen'd at the hand of death;
To the dark realm the spirit wings its way
(The manly body left a load of clay),
And plaintive glides along the dreary coast,
A naked, wandering, melancholy ghost!
Achilles, musing as he roll'd his eyes
O'er the dead hero, thus unheard, replies:
"Die thou the first! When Jove and heaven ordain,

[1] This fierce expression does not imply cannibalism on Achilles's part. The Greek is, "So surely as I myself cannot eat thee, so surely shall the dogs eat thee."

[2] Three maidens who, according to the Greek conception of the moral order of the world, punished crime, especially breaches of piety. They were fearful to look upon, clad in darkness, and with serpents twined in their hair.

[3] The words of the dying were looked upon as prophetic; and such was actually Achilles's fate (see Introduction, p. 11).

I follow thee." He said, and stripp'd the slain.
Then forcing backward from the gaping wound
The reeking javelin, cast it on the ground.
The thronging Greeks behold with wondering eyes[1]
His manly beauty and superior size;
While some, ignobler, the great dead deface
With wounds ungenerous,[2] or with taunts disgrace:
"How chang'd that Hector, who like Jove of late
Sent lightning on our fleets, and scatter'd fate!"
High o'er the slain the great Achilles stands,
Begirt with heroes and surrounding bands;
And thus aloud, while all the host attends:
"Princes and leaders! countrymen and friends!
Since now at length the powerful will of Heaven
The dire destroyer to our arm has given,
Is not Troy fallen already? Haste, ye powers!
See, if already their deserted towers
Are left unmann'd; or if they yet retain
The souls of heroes, their great Hector slain.
But what is Troy, or glory what to me?
Or why reflects my mind on aught but thee,
Divine Patroclus! Death hath seal'd his eyes;
Unwept, unhonor'd, uninterr'd he lies!
Can his dear image from my soul depart,
Long as the vital spirit moves my heart?
If in the melancholy shades below,
The flames of friends and lovers cease to glow,
Yet mine shall sacred last; mine, undecay'd,
Burn on through death, and animate my shade.—
Meanwhile, ye sons of Greece, in triumph bring
The corpse of Hector, and your pæans sing.

[1] "The admiration expressed for the dead body is a thoroughly Greek touch," says Mr. Leaf.

[2] "Each of the Greeks had a claim, for the sake of some kinsman slain by Hector, to a share in the blood revenge."— LEAF.

Be this the song, slow moving toward the shore:
"Hector is dead, and Ilion is no more."
Then his fell[1] soul a thought of vengeance bred;
(Unworthy of himself, and of the dead;)
The nervous ankles bor'd, his feet he bound
With thongs inserted through the double wound;
These fix'd up high behind the rolling wain,[2]
His graceful head was trail'd along the plain.
Proud on his car the insulting victor stood,
And bore aloft his arms, distilling blood.
He smites the steeds; the rapid chariot flies;
The sudden clouds of circling dust arise.
Now lost is all that formidable air;
The face divine and long descending hair
Purple the ground, and streak the sable sand;
Deform'd, dishonor'd in his native land,
Given to the rage of an insulting throng,
And, in his parents' sight, now dragg'd along!
The mother first beheld with sad survey;
She rent her tresses, venerable gray,
And cast, far off, the regal veils away.
With piercing shrieks his bitter fate she moans,
While the sad father answers groans with groans;
Tears after tears his mournful cheeks o'erflow,
And the whole city wears one face of woe;
No less than if the rage of hostile fires,
From her foundations curling to her spires,
O'er the proud citadel at length should rise,
And the last blaze send Ilion to the skies.
The wretched monarch of the falling state,
Distracted, presses to the Dardan gate.
Scarce the whole people stop his desperate course,
While strong affliction gives the feeble force;
Grief tears his heart, and drives him to and fro,

[1] Fierce. [2] The wagon or chariot of Achilles.

In all the raging impotence of woe.
At length he roll'd in dust, and thus begun,
Imploring all, and naming one by one:
"Ah! let me, let me go where sorrow calls;
I, only I, will issue from your walls,
(Guide or companion, friends! I ask ye none,)
And bow before the murderer of my son.
My grief perhaps his pity may engage;
Perhaps at least he may respect my age.
He has a father too; a man like me;
One not exempt from age and misery;
(Vigorous no more, as when in royal grace
He got this pest of me and all my race.)
How many valiant sons, in early bloom,
Has that curs'd hand sent headlong to the tomb!
Thee, Hector! last; thy loss (divinely brave)
Sinks my sad soul with sorrow to the grave.[1]
O had thy gentle spirit pass'd in peace,
The son expiring in the sire's embrace,
While both thy parents wept the fatal hour,
And, bending o'er thee, mix'd the tender shower!
Some comfort that had been, some sad relief,
To melt in full satiety of grief!"
Thus wail'd the father, groveling on the ground,
And all the eyes of Ilion stream'd around.
Amidst her matrons Hecuba appears;
(A mourning princess, and a train in tears:)
"Ah, why has Heaven prolong'd this hated breath,
Patient of horrors, to behold thy death?
O Hector! late thy parents' pride and joy,
The boast of nations! the defense of Troy!
To whom her safety and her fame she ow'd;
Her chief, her hero, and almost her god!
O fatal change! become in one sad day

[1] Compare Jacob's lament, Gen. XLII. 38.

A senseless corse! inanimated clay!"
But not as yet the fatal news had spread
To fair Andromache, of Hector dead;
As yet no messenger had told his fate,
Not e'en his stay without the Scæan gate.
Far in the close recesses of the dome,
Pensive she plied the melancholy loom;
A growing work employ'd her secret hours,
Confusedly gay with intermingled flowers.
Her fair-hair'd handmaids heat the brazen urn,
The bath preparing for her lord's return
In vain; alas! her lord returns no more;
Unbath'd he lies, and bleeds along the shore!
Now from the walls the clamors reach her ear,
And all her members shake with sudden fear;
Forth from her ivory hand the shuttle falls,
And thus, astonish'd, to her maids she calls:
"Ah, follow me! (she cried) what plaintive noise
Invades my ear? 'Tis sure my mother's voice.
My faltering knees their trembling frame desert,
A pulse unusual flutters at my heart;
Some strange disaster, some reverse of fate
(Ye gods avert it!) threats the Trojan state.
Far be the omen which my thoughts suggest!
But much I fear my Hector's dauntless breast
Confronts Achilles; chas'd along the plain,
Shut from our walls! I fear, I fear him slain!
Safe in the crowd he ever scorn'd to wait,
And sought for glory in the jaws of fate.
Perhaps that noble heat has cost his breath,
Now quench'd forever in the arms of death."
She spoke; and furious, with distracted pace,
Fears in her heart, and anguish in her face,
Flies through the dome (the maids her steps pursue),
And mounts the walls, and sends around her view.

Too soon her eyes the killing object found,
The godlike Hector dragg'd along the ground.
A sudden darkness shades her swimming eyes;
She faints, she falls; her breath, her color flies.
Her hair's fair ornaments, the braids that bound,
The net that held them, and the wreath that crown'd,
The veil[1] and diadem[2] flew far away
(The gift of Venus on her bridal day).
Around a train of weeping sisters stands,
To raise her sinking with assistant hands.
Scarce from the verge of death recall'd, again
She faints, or but recovers to complain:
"O wretched husband of a wretched wife!
Born with one fate, to one unhappy life!
For sure one star its baneful beam display'd
On Priam's roof, and Hippoplacia's[3] shade.
From different parents, different climes we came,
At different periods, yet our fate the same!
Why was my birth to great Aëtion ow'd,
And why was all that tender care bestow'd?
Would I had never been!—O thou, the ghost
Of my dead husband! miserably lost!
Thou to the dismal realms forever gone!
And I abandon'd, desolate, alone!
An only child, once comfort of my pains,
Sad product now of hapless love, remains!
No more to smile upon his sire; no friend
To help him now! no father to defend!
For should he 'scape the sword, the common doom,
What wrongs attend him, and what griefs to come!
Even from his own paternal roof expell'd,
Some stranger ploughs his patrimonial field.
The day that to the shades the father sends,

[1] A mantilla, worn similarly to the lace mantilla of Spain.
[2] The diadem held the veil to the head. [3] See Note 3, p. 58.

Robs the sad orphan of his father's friends;
He, wretched outcast of mankind, appears
Forever sad, forever bath'd in tears;
Amongst the happy, unregarded, he
Hangs on the robe, or trembles at the knee,
While those his father's former bounty fed
Nor reach the goblet, nor divide the bread;
The kindest but his present wants allay,
To leave him wretched the succeeding day.
Frugal compassion! Heedless, they who boast
Both parents still, nor feel what he has lost,
Shall cry, 'Begone! thy father feasts not here;'
The wretch obeys, retiring with a tear.
Thus wretched, thus retiring all in tears,
To my sad soul Astyanax appears!
Forc'd by repeated insults to return,
And to his widow'd mother vainly mourn;
He who, with tender delicacy bred,
With princes sported, and on dainties fed,
And when still evening gave him up to rest,
Sunk soft in down upon the nurse's breast,
Must—ah, what must he not? Whom Ilion calls
Astyanax, from her well guarded walls,
Is now that name no more, unhappy boy!
Since now no more thy father guards his Troy.—
But thou, my Hector, liest expos'd in air,
Far from thy parents' and thy consort's care;
Whose hand in vain, directed by her love,
The martial scarf and robe of triumph wove.
Now to devouring flames be these a prey,
Useless to thee, from this accursed day!
Yet let the sacrifice at least be paid,
An honor to the living, not the dead!"
So spake the mournful dame; her matrons hear,
Sigh back her sighs, and answer tear with tear.

BOOK XXIV.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY OF HECTOR.

THE ARGUMENT.

The gods deliberate about the redemption of Hector's body. Jupiter sends Thetis to Achilles, to dispose him for the restoring it, and Iris to Priam, to encourage him to go in person and treat for it. The old king, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his queen, makes ready for the journey, to which he is encouraged by an omen from Jupiter. He sets forth in his chariot, with a wagon loaded with presents, under the charge of Idæus the herald. Mercury descends in the shape of a young man, and conducts him to the pavilion of Achilles. Their conversation on the way. Priam finds Achilles at his table, casts himself at his feet, and begs for the body of his son. Achilles, moved with compassion, grants his request, detains him one night in his tent, and the next morning sends him home with the body. The Trojans run out to meet him. The lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen, with the solemnities of the funeral.

The time of twelve days is employed in this book, while the body of Hector lies in the tent of Achilles; and as many more are spent in the truce allowed for his interment. The scene is partly in Achilles's camp, and partly in Troy.

Now from the finish'd games[1] the Grecian band
Seek their black ships, and clear the crowded strand;
All stretch'd at ease the genial banquet share,
And pleasing slumbers quiet all their care.
Not so Achilles; he, to grief resign'd,
His friend's dear image present to his mind,
Takes his sad couch, more unobserv'd to weep;
Nor tastes the gifts of all-composing sleep.
Restless he roll'd around his weary bed,
And all his soul on his Patroclus fed:
The form so pleasing, and the heart so kind,
That youthful vigor, and that manly mind;

[1] The funeral games in honor of Patroclus, which are described in the twenty-third book.

What toils they shar'd, what martial works they wrought,
What seas they measur'd, and what fields they fought;—
All pass'd before him in remembrance dear,
Thought follows thought, and tear succeeds to tear.
And now supine, now prone,[1] the hero lay,
Now shifts his side, impatient for the day;
Then starting up, disconsolate he goes
Wide on the lonely beach to vent his woes.
There as the solitary mourner raves,
The ruddy morning rises o'er the waves;
Soon as it rose, his furious steeds he join'd!
The chariot flies, and Hector trails behind.
And thrice, Patroclus! round thy monument
Was Hector dragg'd, then hurried to the tent.
There sleep at last o'ercomes the hero's eyes;
While foul in dust the unhonor'd carcass lies,
But not deserted by the pitying skies;[2]
For Phœbus[3] watch'd it with superior care,
Preserv'd from gaping wounds and tainting air;
And, ignominious as it swept the field,
Spread o'er the sacred corse his golden shield.
All heaven was moved, and Hermes will'd to go
By stealth to snatch him from the insulting foe;
But Neptune this, and Pallas this denies,
And th' unrelenting empress of the skies,[4]
E'er since that day implacable to Troy,
What time young Paris, simple shepherd boy,[5]

[1] "Now supine, now prone," i.e., now lying upon the back, now with face downwards. [2] The gods; as in Book I. line 294.

[3] Apollo was a god of medicaments as well as the divinity presiding over the sun (see Introduction, p. 8).

[4] That is, Neptune, Pallas, and Juno were unfavorable to Hermes's wish.

[5] Shortly after his birth, Paris was left upon a mountain to die in order to avert the fate an oracle had foretold,—that he should cause the downfall of Troy. He was found by a shepherd and brought up as his child (see Guerber's Myths of Greece and Rome, p. 307).

Won by destructive lust (reward obscene),
Their charms rejected for the Cyprian[1] queen.
But when the tenth celestial morning broke,
To heaven assembled, thus Apollo spoke:
"Unpitying powers! how oft each holy fane
Has Hector ting'd with blood of victims slain?
And can ye still his cold remains pursue?
Still grudge his body to the Trojans' view?
Deny to consort, mother, son, and sire,
The last sad honors of a funeral fire?
Is then the dire Achilles all your care?
That iron heart, inflexibly severe;
A lion, not a man, who slaughters wide,
In strength of rage, and impotence of pride;
Who hastes to murder with a savage joy,
Invades around, and breathes but to destroy!
Shame is not of his soul; nor understood,
The greatest evil and the greatest good.
Still for one loss he rages unresign'd,
Repugnant to[2] the lot of all mankind;
To lose a friend, a brother, or a son,
Heaven dooms each mortal, and its will is done;
Awhile they sorrow, then dismiss their care;
Fate gives the wound, and man is born to bear.
But this insatiate, the commission given
By fate exceeds,[3] and tempts the wrath of Heaven;
Lo, how his rage dishonest[4] drags along
Hector's dead earth, insensible of wrong!

[1] Cypress, a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Asia Minor, was celebrated as the birthplace and favorite abode of Venus. Hence her appellation "Cyprian queen."

[2] "Repugnant to," i.e., disposed to fight against.

[3] "This insatiate," etc., i.e., this insatiate man exceeds what is permitted by fate.

[4] Dishonorably.

Brave though he be, yet by no reason aw'd,
He violates the laws of man and god."
" If equal honors by the partial skies
Are doom'd both heroes (Juno thus replies),
If Thetis' son must no distinction know,
Then hear, ye gods! the patron of the bow.
But Hector only boasts a mortal claim,
His birth deriving from a mortal dame;
Achilles, of your own ethereal race,
Springs from a goddess and a mortal's grace,
(A goddess by ourself to Peleus given,
A man divine, and chosen friend of heaven.)
To grace those nuptials,[1] from the bright abode
Yourselves were present; where this minstrel-god,
Well pleas'd to share the feast, amid the quire
Stood proud to hymn,[2] and tune his youthful lyre."
Then thus the Thunderer checks the imperial dame:
" Let not thy wrath the court of heaven inflame;
Their merits[3] nor their honors are the same.
But mine, and every god's peculiar grace
Hector deserves, of all the Trojan race;
Still on our shrines his grateful offerings lay
(The only honors men to gods can pay),
Nor ever from our smoking altar ceas'd
The pure libation, and the holy feast.
Howe'er, by stealth to snatch the corse away
We will not; Thetis guards it night and day.
But haste, and summon to our courts above
The azure[4] queen; let her persuasion move
Her furious son from Priam to receive
The proffer'd ransom, and the corse to leave."

[1] See Introduction, p. 8.

[2] "Amid the quire," etc., i.e., amid the choir stood proud to sing the nuptial song.

[3] "Their merits," i.e., neither their merits.

[4] The color of the sea was supposed to cling round the nymphs.

He added not[1]; and Iris[2] from the skies,
Swift as a whirlwind, on the message flies,
Meteorous[3] the face of ocean[4] sweeps,
Refulgent gliding o'er the sable deeps.
Between where Samos wide his forests spreads,
And rocky Imbrus lifts its pointed heads,
Down plung'd the maid (the parted waves resound);
She plung'd and instant shot[5] the dark profound.
As bearing death in the fallacious bait,
From the bent angle sinks the leaden weight;[6]
So pass'd the goddess through the closing wave,
Where Thetis sorrow'd in her secret cave.
There, plac'd amidst her melancholy train
(The blue-hair'd sisters of the sacred main)
Pensive she sat, revolving fates to come,
And wept her godlike son's approaching doom.
Then thus the goddess of the painted bow:
"Arise, O Thetis! from thy seats below,
'Tis Jove that calls." "And why (the dame replies)
Calls Jove his Thetis to the hated skies?
Sad object as I am for heavenly sight!
Ah may my sorrows ever shun the light!
Howe'er, be heaven's almighty Sire obey'd."
She spake, and veil'd her head in sable shade,
Which, flowing long, her graceful person clad;
And forth she pac'd, majestically sad.
Then through the world of waters they repair
(The way fair Iris led) to upper air.

[1] "He added not," i.e., he said no more.

[2] The goddess of the rainbow, and messenger of the gods.

[3] Like a meteor.

[4] The wide expanse of sea between the island of Samos, far south, and Imbrus, immediately northwest of the Trojan dominions.

[5] Passed rapidly through.

[6] "As bearing death," etc. Homer compares Iris's descent through the water to the sinking of a baited fishhook.

The deeps dividing, o'er the coast they rise,
And touch with momentary flight the skies.
There in the lightning's blaze the Sire they found,
And all the gods in shining synod round.
Thetis approach'd with anguish in her face;
(Minerva rising, gave the mourner place;)
Even Juno sought her sorrows to console,
And offer'd from her hand the nectar bowl;
She tasted, and resign'd it; then began
The sacred Sire of gods and mortal man:
"Thou comest, fair Thetis, but with grief o'ercast;
Maternal sorrows, long, ah, long to last!
Suffice, we know and we partake thy cares;
But yield to fate, and hear what Jove declares:
Nine days are past since all the court above
In Hector's cause have mov'd the ear of Jove;
'Twas voted, Hermes from his godlike foe
By stealth should bear him, but we will'd not so;
We will thy son himself the corse restore,
And to his conquest add this glory more.
Then hie thee to him, and our mandate bear;
Tell him he tempts the wrath of Heaven too far;
Nor let him more (our anger if he dread)
Vent his mad vengeance on the sacred dead;
But yield to ransom and the father's prayer;
The mournful father Iris shall prepare
With gifts to sue; and offer to his hands
Whate'er his honor asks, or heart demands."
His words the silver-footed queen attends,
And from Olympus' snowy tops descends.
Arriv'd, she heard the voice of loud lament,
And echoing groans that shook the lofty tent.
His friends prepare the victim, and dispose
Repast unheeded, while he vents his woes;
The goddess seats her by her pensive son,
She press'd his hand, and tender thus begun:

"How long, unhappy! shall thy sorrows flow,
And thy heart waste with life-consuming woe;
Mindless of food, or love, whose pleasing reign
Soothes weary life, and softens human pain?
O snatch the moments yet within thy power;
Not long to live, indulge the amorous hour!
Lo! Jove himself (for Jove's command I bear)
Forbids to tempt the wrath of Heaven too far.
No longer then (his fury if thou dread)
Detain the relics of great Hector dead;
Nor vent on senseless earth thy vengeance vain,
But yield to ransom, and restore the slain."
To whom Achilles: "Be the ransom given,
And we submit, since such the will of Heaven."
While thus they commun'd, from the Olympian bowers
Jove orders Iris to the Trojan towers:
"Haste winged goddess! to the sacred[1] town,
And urge her monarch to redeem his son.
Alone the Ilion ramparts let him leave,
And bear what stern Achilles may receive;
Alone, for so we will; no Trojan near
Except, to place the dead with decent care,
Some aged herald, who with gentle hand
May the slow mules and funeral car command.
Nor let him death, nor let him danger dread,
Safe through the foe by our protection led;
Him Hermes[2] to Achilles shall convey,
Guard of his life, and partner of his way.
Fierce as he is, Achilles' self shall spare
His age, nor touch one venerable hair.

[1] This term was applied by the Greeks to any town under protection of a special god or goddess, and especially to Troy which held the sacred Palladium (see Note 1, p. 55).

[2] See Introduction, p. 8. The Grecians "kept so strict a watch that nothing but a god could pass unobserved."

Some thought there must be in a soul so brave,
Some sense of duty, some desire to save."
Then down her bow the winged Iris drives,
And swift at Priam's mournful court arrives;
Where the sad sons beside their father's throne
Sat bath'd in tears, and answer'd groan with groan.
And all amidst them lay the hoary sire,
(Sad scene of woe!) his face his wrapp'd attire
Conceal'd from sight; with frantic hands he spread
A shower of ashes[1] o'er his neck and head.
From room to room his pensive daughters roam;
Whose shrieks and clamors fill the vaulted dome;
Mindful of those who, late their pride and joy,
Lie pale and breathless round the fields of Troy!
Before the king Jove's messenger appears,
And thus in whispers greets his trembling ears:
"Fear not, O father! no ill news I bear;
From Jove I come, Jove makes thee still his care;
For Hector's sake these walls he bids thee leave,
And bear what stern Achilles may receive;
Alone, for so he wills; no Trojan near,
Except, to place the dead with decent care,
Some aged herald, who with gentle hand
May the slow mules and funeral car command.
Nor shalt thou death, nor shalt thou danger dread,
Safe through the foe by his protection led;
Thee Hermes to Pelides shall convey,
Guard of thy life, and partner of thy way.
Fierce as he is, Achilles' self shall spare
Thy age, nor touch one venerable hair;
Some thought there must be in a soul so brave,
Some sense of duty, some desire to save."
She spoke, and vanish'd. Priam bids prepare
His gentle mules and harness to the car;

[1] In sign of mourning and humiliation (see Esther IV. 1; Jonah III. 6).

There, for the gifts, a polish'd casket lay;
His pious sons the king's command obey.
Then pass'd the monarch to his bridal room,
Where cedar beams the lofty roofs perfume,
And where the treasures of his empire lay;
Then call'd his queen, and thus began to say:
"Unhappy consort of a king distress'd!
Partake the troubles of thy husband's breast:
I saw descend the messenger of Jove,
Who bids me try Achilles' mind to move;
Forsake these ramparts, and with gifts obtain
The corse of Hector, at yon navy[1] slain.
Tell me thy thought; my heart impels to go
Through hostile camps, and bears me to the foe."
The hoary monarch thus.[2] Her piercing cries
Sad Hecuba renews, and then replies:
"Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?
And where the prudence now that aw'd mankind?
Through Phrygia once and foreign regions known;
Now all confus'd, distract'd, overthrown!
Singly to pass through hosts of foes! to face
(O heart of steel!) the murderer of thy race!
To view that deathful eye, and wander o'er[3]
Those hands yet red with Hector's noble gore!
Alas! my lord, he knows not how to spare,
And what his mercy, thy slain sons declare;
So brave! so many fallen! To claim his rage
Vain were thy dignity, and vain thy age.
No; pent in this sad palace, let us give
To grief the wretched days we have to live.
Still, still for Hector let our sorrows flow,
Born to his own, and to his parents' woe!
Doom'd from the hour his luckless life begun,

[1] Fleet; company of ships. [2] Spake thus.
[3] "Wander o'er," i.e., touch in incoherent supplication.

To dogs, to vultures, and to Peleus' son!
Oh! in his dearest blood might I allay
My rage, and these barbarities repay!
For ah! could Hector merit thus, whose breath
Expir'd not meanly, in unactive[1] death?
He pour'd his latest blood in manly fight,
And fell a hero in his country's right."
"Seek not to stay me, nor my soul affright
With words of omen, like a bird of night,
(Replied unmov'd the venerable man;)
'Tis Heaven commands me, and you urge in vain.
Had any mortal voice the injunction laid,
Nor augur, priest, nor seer, had been obey'd.
A present goddess brought the high command;
I saw, I heard her, and the word shall stand.—
I go, ye gods! obedient to your call;
If in yon camp your powers have doom'd my fall,
Content; by the same hand let me expire!
Add to the slaughter'd son the wretched sire!
One cold embrace at least may be allow'd,
And my last tears flow mingled with his blood!"
From forth his open'd stores, this said, he drew
Twelve costly carpets of refulgent hue,
As many vests, as many mantles told,
And twelve fair veils, and garments stiff with gold;
Two tripods[2] next, and twice two chargers[3] shine,
With ten pure talents from the richest mine;
And last a large well-labor'd bowl had place,
(The pledge of treaties once with friendly Thrace.)
Seem'd all too mean the stores he could employ,

[1] An old and poetic form of inactive.

[2] "Tripods," says Pope, "were vessels supported on three feet, with handles on the sides; they were of several kinds and for several uses; some were consecrated to sacrifice, some used as tables, some as seats, others hung up as ornaments on walls of houses or temples." [3] Platters.

For one last look to buy him [1] back to Troy!
Lo! the sad father, frantic with his pain,
Around him furious drives his menial train;
In vain each slave with duteous care attends,
Each office hurts him, and each face offends.
"What make ye here, officious crowds! (he cries;)
Hence! nor obtrude your anguish on my eyes.
Have ye no griefs at home, to fix ye there?
Am I the only object of despair?
Am I become my people's common show,
Set up by Jove your spectacle of woe?
No, you must feel him too; yourselves must fall;
The same stern god to ruin gives you all.
Nor is great Hector lost by me alone;
Your sole defense, your guardian power is gone!
I see your blood the fields of Phrygia drown,
I see the ruins of your smoking town!—
O send me, gods! ere that sad day shall come,
A willing ghost to Pluto's dreary dome!"
He said, and feebly drives his friends away;
The sorrowing friends his frantic rage obey.
Next on his sons his erring fury falls,
Polites, Paris, Agathon, he calls;
His threats Deïphobus and Dius hear,
Hippothoüs, Pammon, Helenus the seer,
And generous Antiphon; for yet these nine
Surviv'd, sad relics of his numerous line:
"Inglorious sons of an unhappy sire!
Why did not all in Hector's cause expire?
Wretch that I am! my bravest offspring slain,
You, the disgrace of Priam's house, remain!
Mestor the brave, renown'd in ranks of war,
With Troilus,[2] dreadful on his rushing car,

[1] Hector.

[2] "Troilus is only once named in the Iliad."

And last great Hector, more than man divine,
For sure he seem'd not of terrestial line!—
All those relentless Mars untimely slew,
And left me these, a soft and servile crew,
Whose days the feast and wanton dance employ,
Gluttons and flatterers, the contempt of Troy!
Why teach ye not my rapid wheels to run,
And speed my journey to redeem my son?"
The sons their father's wretched age revere,
Forgive his anger, and produce the car.
High on the seat the cabinet[1] they bind;
The new-made car with solid beauty shin'd;[2]
Box[3] was the yoke, emboss'd with costly pains,
And hung with ringlets to receive the reins;
Nine cubits long, the traces swept the ground;
These to the chariot's polish'd pole they bound,
Then fix'd a ring the running reins to guide,
And close beneath the gather'd ends were tied.
Next with the gifts (the price of Hector slain)
The sad attendants load the groaning wain;
Last to the yoke the well-match'd mules they bring,
(The gift of Mysia[4] to the Trojan king.)
But the fair horses,[5] long his darling care,
Himself receiv'd, and harness'd to his car;
Griev'd as he was, he not this task denied;
The hoary herald help'd him, at his side.
While careful these the gentle coursers join'd,
Sad Hecuba approach'd with anxious mind,
A golden bowl that foam'd with fragrant wine

[1] The Greek word used here means a kind of box or basket placed on the wheel frame and used for carrying the gifts.

[2] Shone. [3] Boxwood.

[4] The district in northwestern Asia Minor in which Troy was situated.

[5] The horses drew the car of Priam and the herald; the mules, that which bore the ransom, and which was to bring back the body of Hector.

(Libation destin'd to the power divine)
Held in her right, before the steed she stands,
And thus consigns it to the monarch's hands:
"Take this, and pour to Jove; that safe from harms
His grace restore thee to our roof and arms.
Since victor of thy fears, and slighting mine,
Heaven, or thy soul, inspires this bold design;
Pray to that god, who high on Ida's [1] brow
Surveys thy desolated realms below,
His winged messenger [2] to send from high,
And lead thy way with heavenly augury;
Let the strong sovereign of the plumy race [3]
Tower on the right of yon ethereal space.
That sign beheld, and strengthen'd from above,
Boldly pursue the journey mark'd by Jove;
But if the god his augury denies,
Suppress thy impulse, nor reject advice."
"'Tis just (said Priam) to the Sire above
To raise our hands; for who so good as Jove?"
He spoke, and bade the attendant handmaid bring
The purest water of the living spring;
(Her ready hands the ewer and basin held;)
Then took the golden cup his queen had fill'd,
On the mid pavement [4] pours the rosy wine,
Uplifts his eyes, and calls the power divine:
"O first and greatest! heaven's imperial lord!
On lofty Ida's holy hill ador'd!
To stern Achilles now direct my ways,
And teach him mercy when a father prays.

[1] The summit of Mt. Ida (the southern boundary of the Trojan realm) was supposed to be the place from which the gods watched the battles in the plain of Troy.

[2] The eagle.

[3] "Plumy race," i.e., the feathered race; the birds.

[4] "On the mid pavement," i.e., in the middle of the pavement.

If such thy will, despatch from yonder sky
Thy sacred bird, celestial augury!
Let the strong sovereign of the plumy race
Tower on the right of yon ethereal space;
So shall thy suppliant, strengthen'd from above,
Fearless pursue the journey mark'd by Jove."
  Jove heard his prayer, and from the throne on high,
Despatch'd his bird, celestial augury!
The swift-wing'd chaser of the feather'd game,
And known to gods by Percnos'[1] lofty name.
Wide as appears some palace gate display'd,
So broad his pinions stretch'd their ample shade,
As stooping dexter,[2] with resounding wings,
The imperial bird descends in airy rings.
A dawn of joy in every face appears;
The mourning matron dries her timorous tears;
Swift on his car the impatient monarch sprung;
The brazen portal in his passage rung;
The mules preceding draw the loaded wain,
Charg'd with the gifts; Idæus[3] holds the rein;
The king himself his gentle steeds controls,
And through surrounding friends the chariot rolls.
On his slow wheels the following people wait,
Mourn at each step, and give him up to fate;
With hands uplifted eye him as he pass'd,
And gaze upon him as[4] they gaz'd their last.
Now forward fares the father on his way;
Through the lone fields, and back to Ilion they.
Great Jove beheld him as he cross'd the plain,
And felt the woes of miserable man.
Then thus to Hermes: "Thou whose constant cares
Still succor mortals, and attend their prayers,

[1] "Whom they call Perknos," says Homer (see Note 1, p. 32).
[2] On the right.
[3] A Trojan herald (see line 185).
[4] As if.

Behold an object to thy charge consign'd;
If ever pity touch'd thee for mankind,
Go, guard the sire; the observing foe prevent,
And safe conduct him to Achilles' tent."
The god obeys, his golden pinions[1] binds,
And mounts incumbent on the wings of winds,
That high, through fields of air, his flight sustain,
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main;
Then grasps the wand[2] that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumbers seals the wakeful eye;
Thus arm'd, swift Hermes steers his airy way,
And stoops on Hellespont's resounding sea.
A beauteous youth, majestic and divine,
He seem'd; fair offspring of some princely line!
Now twilight veil'd the glaring face of day,
And clad the dusky fields in sober gray;
What time the herald and the hoary king
(Their chariots stopping at the silver spring[3]
That circling Ilus' ancient marble flows)
Allow'd their mules and steeds a short repose.
Through the dim shade the herald first espies
A man's approach, and thus to Priam cries:
"I mark some foe's advance; O king! beware;
This hard adventure claims thy utmost care!
For much I fear destruction hovers nigh;
Our state asks counsel; is it best to fly?
Or old and helpless, at his feet to fall,
Two wretched suppliants, and for mercy call?"
The afflicted monarch shiver'd with despair;
Pale grew his face, and upright stood his hair;
Sunk was his heart; his color went and came;
A sudden trembling shook his aged frame;

[1] "His feathered shoes, immortal, and made all of gold," says Chapman.
[2] The "caduceus," Hermes's rod or ensign of authority.
[3] The Scamander.

When Hermes, greeting, touch'd his royal hand,
And, gentle, thus accosts with kind demand:
"Say whither, father! when each mortal sight
Is seal'd in sleep, thou wanderest through the night?
Why roam thy mules and steeds the plains along,
Through Grecian foes, so numerous and so strong?
What couldst thou hope, should these thy treasures view?
These, who with endless hate thy race pursue?
For what defense, alas! could'st thou provide?
Thyself not young, a weak old man thy guide?
Yet suffer not thy soul to sink with dread;
From me no harm shall touch thy reverend head;
From Greece I'll guard thee too;[1] for in those lines
The living image of my father shines."
"Thy words, that speak benevolence of mind,
Are true, my son! (the godlike sire rejoin'd;)
Great are my hazards; but the gods survey
My steps, and send thee, guardian of my way.
Hail, and be bless'd! For scarce of mortal kind
Appear thy form, thy features, and thy mind."
"Nor true are all thy words, nor erring wide,
(The sacred messenger of heaven replied;)
But say, convey'st thou through the lonely plains
What yet most precious of thy store remains,
To lodge in safety with some friendly hand,
Prepar'd, perchance, to leave thy native land?
Or fliest thou now?—What hopes can Troy retain,
Thy matchless son, her guard and glory, slain?"
The king, alarm'd: "Say what, and whence thou art
Who search the sorrows of a parent's heart,
And know so well how godlike Hector died?"
Thus Priam spoke, and Hermes thus replied:

[1] The faith that heaven sends angels to aid the afflicted has prevailed among many peoples. "The story of Tobit and Raphael (Tobit v. 13) has," says Madame Dacier, "a wonderful relation with this of Homer."

"You tempt me, father, and with pity touch;
On this sad subject you inquire too much.
Oft have these eyes that godlike Hector view'd
In glorious fight, with Grecian blood imbrued;
I saw him when, like Jove, his flames he toss'd[1]
On thousand ships, and wither'd half a host;
I saw, but help'd not; stern Achilles' ire
Forbade assistance, and enjoy'd the fire.
For him I serve, of Myrmidonian race;
One ship convey'd us from our native place.
Polyctor is my sire, an honor'd name,
Old like thyself, and not unknown to fame;
Of seven his sons, by whom the lot was cast
To serve our prince, it fell on me, the last.
To watch this quarter, my adventure falls,
For with the morn the Greeks attack your walls;
Sleepless they sit, impatient to engage,
And scarce their rulers check their martial rage."
"If then thou art of stern Pelides' train,
(The mournful monarch thus rejoin'd again,)
Ah, tell me truly, where, oh! where are laid
My son's dear relics? what befalls him dead?
Have dogs dismember'd (on the naked plains),
Or yet unmangled rest, his cold remains?"
"O favor'd of the skies! (thus answer'd then
The power that mediates between god and men,)
Nor dogs nor vultures have thy Hector rent,
But whole he lies, neglected in the tent;
This the twelfth evening since he rested there,
Untouch'd by worms, untainted by the air.
Still as Aurora's[2] ruddy beam is spread,

[1] See Introduction, p. 10.

[2] The goddess of the dawn, who, with rose-tinted fingers, opened the eastern gates and trailed her saffron robe across the sky to announce the coming of day (see lines 866, 867).

Round his friend's tomb Achilles drags the dead;
Yet undisfigur'd, or in limb or face,
All fresh he lies, with every living grace,
Majestical in death! No stains are found
O'er all the corse, and clos'd is every wound,
Though many a wound they gave. Some heavenly care,
Some hand divine, preserves him ever fair;
Or all the host of heaven, to whom he led
A life so grateful, still regard him dead."
Thus spoke to Priam the celestial guide,
And joyful thus the royal sire replied:
"Blest is the man who pays the gods above
The constant tribute of respect and love!
Those who inhabit the Olympian bower
My son forgot not, in exalted power;
And Heaven, that every virtue bears in mind,
Even to the ashes of the just is kind.
But thou, O generous youth! this goblet take,
A pledge of gratitude for Hector's sake;
And while the favoring gods our steps survey,
Safe to Pelides' tent conduct my way."
To whom the latent[1] god: "O king, forbear
To tempt my youth, for apt is youth to err.
But can I, absent from my prince's sight,
Take gifts in secret, that must shun the light?[2]
What from our master's interest thus we draw,
Is but a licens'd theft that 'scapes the law.
Respecting him, my soul abjures the offense;
And as the crime, I dread the consequence.
Thee, far as Argos, pleas'd I could convey,

[1] Hidden; disguised.

[2] "This may show us how strict the notions of justice were in the days of Homer," says an old commentator, "when, if a prince's servant received any present without the knowledge of his master, he was esteemed a thief and a robber."

Guard of thy life, and partner of thy way;
On thee attend, thy safety to maintain,
O'er pathless forests, or the roaring main."
He said, then took the chariot at a bound,
And snatch'd the reins, and whirl'd the lash around.
Before the inspiring god that urg'd them on,
The coursers fly with spirit not their own.
And now they reach'd the naval walls, and found
The guards repasting,[1] while the bowls go round.
On these the virtue of his wand he tries,
And pours deep slumber on their watchful eyes;
Then heav'd the massy gates, remov'd the bars,
And o'er the trenches led the rolling cars.
Unseen through all the hostile camp they went,
And now approach'd Pelides' lofty tent.
On firs the roof was rais'd, and cover'd o'er
With reeds collected from the marshy shore;
And, fenc'd with palisades, a hall of state
(The work of soldiers), where the hero sat.
Large was the door, whose well compacted strength
A solid pine tree barr'd of wondrous length;
Scarce three strong Greeks could lift its mighty weight,
But great Achilles singly clos'd the gate.
This Hermes (such the power of gods) set wide;
Then swift alighted the celestial guide,
And thus reveal'd: "Hear, prince! and understand
Thou ow'st thy guidance to no mortal hand.
Hermes I am, descended from above,
The king of arts, the messenger of Jove.
Farewell; to shun Achilles' sight I fly;
Uncommon are such favors of the sky,
Nor stand confess'd to frail mortality.
Now fearless enter, and prefer thy prayers;
Adjure him by his father's silver hairs,

[1] Feasting.

His son, his mother![1] urge him to bestow
Whatever pity that stern heart can know."
Thus having said, he vanish'd from his eyes,
And in a moment shot into the skies.
The king, confirm'd from heaven, alighted there,
And left his aged herald on the car;
With solemn pace through various rooms he went,
And found Achilles in his inner tent.
There sat the hero; Alcimus the brave,
And great Automedon[2] attendance gave;
These serv'd his person at the royal feast;
Around, at awful distance, stood the rest.
Unseen by these, the king his entry made,
And, prostrate now before Achilles laid,
Sudden (a venerable sight!) appears;
Embrac'd his knees, and bath'd his hands in tears;
Those direful hands his kisses press'd, imbrued
Even with the best, the dearest of his blood!
As when a wretch (who, conscious of his crime,
Pursued for murder, flies his native clime,)
Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale, amaz'd,
All gaze, all wonder,—thus Achilles gaz'd;
Thus stood the attendants stupid with surprise,
All mute, yet seem'd to question with their eyes;
Each look'd on other, none the silence broke,
Till thus at last the kingly suppliant spoke:
"Ah think, thou favor'd of the powers divine![3]
Think of thy father's age, and pity mine!

[1] Peleus was his father, Thetis his mother, and Neoptolemus his son.

[2] Alcimus and Automedon were dear friends of Achilles and the latter was his charioteer.

[3] "The whole scene between Achilles and Priam, when the latter comes to the Greek camp for the purpose of redeeming the body of Hector, is at once the most profoundly skillful, and yet the simplest and most affecting, passage in the Iliad."—COLERIDGE.

In me that father's reverend image trace,
Those silver hairs, that venerable face;
His trembling limbs, his helpless person, see!
In all my equal but in misery!
Yet now, perhaps, some turn of human fate
Expels him helpless from his peaceful state;
Think from some powerful foe thou seest him fly,
And beg protection with a feeble cry.
Yet still one comfort in his soul may rise;
He hears his son still lives to glad his eyes;
And, hearing, still may hope a better day
May send him thee, to chase that foe away.
No comfort to my griefs, no hopes remain,
The best, the bravest, of my sons are slain!
Yet what a race! ere Greece to Ilion came;
The pledge of many a lov'd and loving dame.
Nineteen one mother bore—dead, all are dead!
How oft, alas! has wretched Priam bled!
Still one was left their loss to recompense;
His father's hope, his country's last defense.
Him too thy rage has slain! beneath thy steel,
Unhappy in his country's cause he fell!
"For him through hostile camps I bent my way,
For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay;
Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear;
O hear the wretched, and the gods revere!
"Think of thy father, and this face behold!
See him in me, as helpless and as old!
Though not so wretched; there he yields to me,
The first of men in sovereign misery!
Thus forc'd to kneel, thus groveling to embrace
The scourge and ruin of my realm and race;
Suppliant my children's murderer to implore,
And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore!"

These words soft pity in the chief inspire,[1]
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of his sire.
Then with his hand (as prostrate still he lay)
The old man's cheek he gently turn'd away.
Now each by turns indulg'd the gush of woe,
And now the mingled tides together flow;
This[2] low on earth, that[3] gently bending o'er;
A father one, and one a son deplore.
But great Achilles different passions rend,
And now his sire he mourns, and now his friend.
The infectious softness through the heroes ran;
One universal solemn shower began;
They bore as heroes, but they felt as man.
Satiate at length with unavailing woes,
From the high throne divine Achilles rose;
The reverend monarch by the hand he rais'd,
On his white beard and form majestic gaz'd,
Not unrelenting; then serene began
With words to soothe the miserable man:
"Alas, what weight of anguish hast thou known,
Unhappy prince! thus guardless and alone
To pass through foes, and thus undaunted face
The man whose fury has destroy'd thy race!
Heaven sure has arm'd thee with a heart of steel,
A strength proportion'd to the woes you feel.
Rise, then; let reason mitigate your care;
To mourn avails not; man is born to bear.
Such is, alas! the gods' severe decree;
They, only they are blest, and only free.
Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,
The source of evil one, and one of good;

[1] "We come now almost to the end of the poem, and consequently to the end of the anger of Achilles; and Homer has described the abatement of it with excellent judgment."—POPE.

[2] Priam. [3] Achilles.

From thence the cup[1] of mortal man he fills,
Blessings to these, to those distributes ills;
To most he mingles both; the wretch decreed
To taste the bad unmix'd, is curs'd indeed;
Pursued by wrongs, by meager famine driven,
He wanders, outcast both of earth and heaven.
The happiest taste not happiness sincere;
But find the cordial draught is dash'd with care.
Who more than Peleus shone in wealth and power!
What stars concurring bless'd his natal hour!
A realm, a goddess, to his wishes given;
Grac'd by the gods with all the gifts of heaven.
One evil yet o'ertakes his latest day:
No race succeeding to imperial sway;
An only son; and he, alas! ordain'd
To fall untimely in a foreign land.
See him, in Troy, the pious care decline
Of his weak age, to live the curse of thine!
Thou, too, old man, hast happier days beheld;
In riches once, in children once excell'd;
Extended Phrygia own'd thy ample reign,
And all fair Lesbos'[2] blissful seats contain,
And all wide Hellespont's unmeasur'd main.
But since the god his hand has pleas'd to turn,
And fill thy measure from his bitter urn,
What sees the sun, but hapless heroes' falls?
War, and the blood of men, surround thy walls!
What must be, must be. Bear thy lot, nor shed
These unavailing sorrows o'er the dead;
Thou canst not call him from the Stygian shore,
But thou, alas! may'st live to suffer more!"
To whom the king: "O favor'd of the skies!
Here let me grow to earth! since Hector lies

[1] The phrase is similar in Ps. LXXV. 8.

[2] An island in the Ægean Sea, south of Troy.

On the bare beach, depriv'd of obsequies.
O give me Hector! to my eyes restore
His corse, and take the gifts; I ask no more.
Thou, as thou may'st, these boundless stores enjoy;
Safe may'st thou sail, and turn thy wrath from Troy.
So shall thy pity and forbearance give
A weak old man to see the light and live!"
"Move me no more, (Achilles thus replies,
While kindling anger sparkled in his eyes,)
Nor seek by tears my steady soul to bend;
To yield thy Hector I myself intend.
For know, from Jove my goddess mother came,
(Old Ocean's daughter, silver-footed dame,)
Nor comest thou but by heaven; nor comest alone,
Some god impels with courage not thy own;
No human hand the weighty gates unbarr'd,
Nor could the boldest of our youth have dar'd
To pass our outworks, or elude the guard.
Cease; lest, neglectful of high Jove's command,
I show thee, king! thou tread'st on hostile land.
Release my knees, thy suppliant arts give o'er,
And shake the purpose of my soul no more."
The sire obey'd him, trembling and o'eraw'd.
Achilles, like a lion, rush'd abroad;
Automedon and Alcimus attend,
(Whom most he honor'd, since he lost his friend;)
These to unyoke the mules and horses went,
And led the hoary herald to the tent;
Next, heap'd on high, the numerous presents bear
(Great Hector's ransom), from the polish'd car
Two splendid mantles, and a carpet spread
They leave, to cover and enwrap the dead.
Then call the handmaids, with assistant toil
To wash the body and anoint with oil,
Apart from Priam; lest the unhappy sire,
Provok'd to passion, once more rouse to ire

The stern Pelides; and nor sacred age,
Nor Jove's command, should check the rising rage.
This done, the garments o'er the corse they spread;
Achilles lifts it to the funeral bed;
Then, while the body on the car they laid,
He groans, and calls on lov'd Patroclus' shade:
"If, in that gloom which never light must know,[1]
The deeds of mortals touch the ghosts below,
O friend! forgive me, that I thus fulfill
(Restoring Hector) Heaven's unquestion'd will.
The gifts the father gave, be ever thine,
To grace thy manes,[2] and adorn thy shrine."
He said, and, entering, took his seat of state,
Where full before him reverend Priam sate;
To whom, compos'd, the godlike chief begun:
"Lo! to thy prayer restor'd, thy breathless son;
Extended on the funeral couch he lies,
And soon as morning paints the eastern skies,
The sight is granted to thy longing eyes;
But now the peaceful hours of sacred night
Demand reflection, and to rest invite;
Nor thou, O father! thus consum'd with woe,
The common cares that nourish life forego.
Not thus did Niobe,[3] of form divine,
A parent once, whose sorrows equall'd thine.
Six youthful sons, as many blooming maids,
In one sad day beheld the Stygian shades;
Those by Apollo's silver bow were slain,

[1] Hades was conceived as being under the earth (see Note 2, p. 60, and Introduction, p. 7).

[2] The deified shades of the dead, according to the belief that the soul after death has relations with the living.

[3] The wife of Amphion, King of Thebes, who boasted of her children over Latona, mother of Apollo and Diana, and was punished as described in lines 759–779.

These, Cynthia's[1] arrows stretch'd upon the plain.
So was her pride chastis'd by wrath divine,
Who match'd her own with bright Latona's line;
But two the goddess, twelve the queen enjoy'd;
Those boasted twelve the avenging two destroy'd.
Steep'd in their blood, and in the dust outspread,
Nine days, neglected, lay expos'd the dead;
None by to weep them, to inhume[2] them, none;
(For Jove had turn'd the nation all to stone.)
The gods themselves, at length relenting, gave
The unhappy race the honors of a grave.
Herself a rock (for such was Heaven's high will),
Through deserts wild now pours a weeping rill;
Where round the bed whence Acheloüs[3] springs,
The watery fairies dance in mazy rings;
There high on Sipylus's[4] shaggy brow,
She stands, her own sad monument of woe;
The rock forever lasts, the tears forever flow.
"Such griefs, O king! have other parents known;
Remember theirs, and mitigate thy own.
The care of heaven thy Hector has appear'd,
Nor shall he lie unwept, and uninterr'd;
Soon may thy aged cheeks in tears be drown'd,
And all the eyes of Ilion stream around."
He said, and, rising, chose the victim ewe
With silver fleece, which his attendants slew.
The limbs they sever from the reeking hide,
With skill prepare them, and in parts divide;

[1] A name for Diana.

[2] Bury.

[3] Homer here uses this name with the meaning of "running water." There may have been such a river in Lydia, but none is mentioned by writers other than Homer.

[4] It is still sought to identify the figure on the slope of Mount Sipylus near Smyrna with the weeping Niobe.

Each on the coals the separate morsels lays,
And, hasty, snatches from the rising blaze.
With bread the glittering canisters[1] they load,
Which round the board Automedon bestow'd.
The chief himself to each his portion plac'd,
And each indulging shar'd in sweet repast.
When now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
The wondering hero eyes his royal guest.
No less the royal guest the hero eyes,
His godlike aspect and majestic size;[2]
Here, youthful grace and noble fire engage;
And there, the mild benevolence of age.
Thus gazing long, the silence neither broke,
(A solemn scene!) at length the father spoke:
"Permit me now, belov'd of Jove! to steep
My care-full temples in the dew of sleep;
For, since the day that number'd with the dead
My hapless son, the dust has been my bed;
Soft sleep a stranger to my weeping eyes;
My only food, my sorrows and my sighs!
Till now, encourag'd by the grace you give,
I share thy banquet, and consent to live."
With that, Achilles bade prepare the bed,
With purple soft and shaggy carpets spread;
Forth, by the flaming lights, they bend their way,
And place the couches, and the coverings lay.
Then he: "Now, father, sleep, but sleep not here;
Consult thy safety, and forgive my fear
Lest any Argive, at this hour awake,
To ask our counsel, or our orders take,
Approaching sudden to our open'd tent,

[1] Earthern dishes.

[2] "The poet omits no opportunity of praising his hero Achilles. . . . In this place he makes his very enemy admire his personage and be astonished at his manly beauty."— POPE.

Perchance behold thee, and our grace prevent.
Should such report thy honor'd person here,
The king of men the ransom might defer.[1]
But say with speed, if aught of thy desire
Remains unask'd; what time the rites require
To inter thy Hector; for, so long we stay
Our slaughtering arm, and bid the hosts obey."
"If, then, thy will permit (the monarch said)
To finish all due honors to the dead,
This of thy grace accord: to thee are known
The fears of Ilion, clos'd within her town;
And at what distance from our walls aspire
The hills of Ide,[2] and forests for the fire.
Nine days to vent our sorrows I request;
The tenth shall see the funeral and the feast;
The next, to raise his monument be given;
The twelfth we war, if war be doom'd by Heaven!"
"This thy request (replied the chief) enjoy;
Till then our arms suspend the fall of Troy."
Then gave his hand at parting, to prevent
The old man's fears, and turn'd within the tent;
Where fair Briseis, bright in blooming charms,
Expects her hero with desiring arms.
But in the porch the king and herald rest;
Sad dreams of care yet wandering in their breast.
Now gods and men the gifts of sleep partake;
Industrious Hermes only was awake,
The king's return revolving in his mind,
To pass the ramparts, and the watch to blind.
The power descending hover'd o'er his head:
"And sleep'st thou, father! (thus the vision said:)
Now dost thou sleep, when Hector is restor'd?
Nor fear the Grecian foes, or Grecian lord?

[1] "The king of men," etc., i.e., Agamemnon might put off the giving up of the body. [2] Mount Ida.

Thy presence here should stern Atrides see,
Thy still surviving sons may sue for thee;
May offer all thy treasures yet contain,
To spare thy age,—and offer all in vain."
  Wak'd with the word the trembling sire arose,
And rais'd his friend; the god before him goes;
He joins the mules, directs them with his hand,
And moves in silence through the hostile land.
When now to Xanthus' yellow stream[1] they drove,
(Xanthus, immortal progeny of Jove,)
The winged deity forsook their view,
And in a moment to Olympus flew.
Now shed Aurora round her saffron ray,
Sprang through the gates of light, and gave the day.
Charg'd with the mournful load, to Ilion go
The sage and king, majestically slow.
Cassandra[2] first beholds, from Ilion's spire,
The sad procession of her hoary sire;
Then, as the pensive pomp advanc'd more near,
(Her breathless brother stretch'd upon the bier,)
A shower of tears o'erflows her beauteous eyes,
Alarming thus all Ilion with her cries:
  "Turn here your steps, and here your eyes employ,
Ye wretched daughters and ye sons of Troy!
If e'er ye rush'd in crowds, with vast delight,
To hail your hero glorious from the fight,
Now meet him dead, and let your sorrows flow;
Your common triumph, and your common woe."
  In thronging crowds they issue to the plains;
Nor man nor woman in the walls remains;
In every face the selfsame grief is shown,
And Troy sends forth one universal groan.

[1] Compare with "Xanthus' silver flood," Book VI. line 212.

[2] A daughter of Priam and Hecuba, to whom Apollo gave the gift of prophecy.

At Scæa's gates they meet the mourning wain,
Hang on the wheels, and grovel round the slain.
The wife and mother, frantic with despair,
Kiss his pale cheek, and rend their scatter'd hair.
Thus wildly wailing, at the gates they lay,
And there had sigh'd and sorrow'd out the day;
But godlike Priam from the chariot rose:
"Forbear (he cried) this violence of woes;
First to the palace let the car proceed,
Then pour your boundless sorrows o'er the dead."
The waves of people at his word divide,
Slow rolls the chariot through the following tide;
Even to the palace the sad pomp they wait;
They weep, and place him on the bed of state.
A melancholy choir [1] attend around,
With plaintive sighs, and music's solemn sound;
Alternately they sing, alternate flow
The obedient tears, melodious in their woe.
While deeper sorrows groan from each full heart,
And nature speaks at every pause of art.
First to the corse the weeping consort flew;
Around his neck her milk-white arms she threw,
"And oh, my Hector! Oh, my lord! (she cries)
Snatch'd in thy bloom from these desiring eyes!
Thou to the dismal realms forever gone!
And I abandon'd, desolate, alone!
An only son, [2] once comfort of our pains,
Sad product now of hapless love, remains!
Never to manly age that son shall rise,
Or with increasing graces glad my eyes;
For Ilion now (her great defender slain)
Shall sink a smoking ruin on the plain.

[1] Mourners who for hire sang dirges about the dead. The custom prevailed among ancient peoples (see Eccles. XII. 5).

[2] See Book VI. line 502; Book XXII. lines 643–653.

Who now protects her wives with guardian care?
Who saves her infants from the rage of war?
Now hostile fleets must waft those infants o'er
(Those wives must wait them) to a foreign shore.
Thou too, my son, to barbarous climes shalt go,
The sad companion of thy mother's woe;
Driven hence a slave before the victor's sword,
Condemn'd to toil for some inhuman lord.
Or else some Greek whose father press'd the plain,
Or son, or brother, by great Hector slain,
In Hector's blood his vengeance shall enjoy,
And hurl thee headlong from the towers of Troy. [1]
For thy stern father never spar'd a foe;
Thence all these tears, and all this scene of woe!
Thence many evils his sad parents bore,
His parents many, but his consort more.
Why gav'st thou not to me thy dying hand?
And why receiv'd not I thy last command?
Some word thou would'st have spoke, which, sadly dear,
My soul might keep, or utter with a tear;
Which never, never could be lost in air,
Fix'd in my heart, and oft repeated there!" [2]
Thus to her weeping maids she makes her moan;
Her weeping handmaids echo groan for groan.
The mournful mother next sustains her part:
"O thou, the best, the dearest to my heart!
Of all my race thou most by Heaven approv'd,
And by the immortals even in death belov'd!
While all my other sons in barbarous bands
Achilles bound, and sold to foreign lands,

[1] This was the fate of Astyanax, when Troy was taken.

[2] "Andromache speaks like a tender wife, Hecuba like a fond mother, and Helen mourns with a sorrow rising from self-accusation. Andromache commends his bravery, Hecuba his manly beauty, and Helen his gentleness and humanity."—POPE.

This felt no chains, but went a glorious ghost,
Free, and a hero, to the Stygian coast.
Sentenc'd, 'tis true, by his inhuman doom,
Thy noble corse was dragg'd around the tomb
(The tomb of him thy warlike arm had slain);
Ungenerous insult, impotent and vain!
Yet glow'st thou fresh with every living grace;
No mark of pain, or violence of face;
Rosy and fair! as[1] Phœbus' silver bow
Dismiss'd thee gently to the shades below."
  Thus spoke the dame, and melted into tears.
Sad Helen next in pomp of grief appears;
Fast from the shining sluices of her eyes
Fall the round crystal drops, while thus she cries:
  "Ah, dearest friend! in whom the gods had join'd[2]
The mildest manners with the bravest mind;
Now twice ten years (unhappy years) are o'er
Since Paris brought me to the Trojan shore;
(O had I perish'd, ere that form divine
Seduc'd this soft, this easy heart of mine!)
Yet was it ne'er my fate from thee to find
A deed ungentle, or a word unkind;
When others curs'd the authoress of their woe,
Thy pity check'd my sorrows in their flow;

[1] As if.

[2] "Few things are more interesting than to observe how the same hand that has given us the fury and inconsistency of Achilles, gives us also the consummate elegance and tenderness of Helen. She is through the Iliad a genuine lady, graceful in motion and speech, noble in her associations, full of remorse for a fault for which higher powers seem responsible, yet grateful and affectionate towards those with whom that fault had committed her. I have always thought the following speech, in which Helen laments Hector, and hints at her own invidious and unprotected situation in Troy, as almost the sweetest passage in the poem. It is another striking instance of that refinement of feeling and softness of tone which so generally distinguish the last book of the Iliad from the rest."—COLERIDGE.

If some proud brother ey'd me with disdain,
Or scornful sister, with her sweeping train,
Thy gentle accents soften'd all my pain.
For thee I mourn; and mourn myself in thee,
The wretched source of all this misery.
The fate I caus'd, forever I bemoan;
Sad Helen has no friend, now thou art gone!
Through Troy's wide streets abandon'd shall I roam!
In Troy deserted, as abhorr'd at home!"
So spoke the fair, with sorrow-streaming eye.
Distressful beauty melts each stander-by;
On all around the infectious sorrow grows;
But Priam check'd the torrent as it rose:
"Perform, ye Trojans! what the rites require,
And fell the forests for a funeral pyre;
Twelve days, nor foes nor secret ambush dread;
Achilles grants these honors to the dead."
He spoke; and, at his word, the Trojan train
Their mules and oxen harness to the wain,
Pour through the gates, and fell'd from Ida's crown,
Roll back the gather'd forests[1] to the town.
These toils continue nine succeeding days,
And high in air a sylvan structure raise.
But when the tenth fair morn began to shine,
Forth to the pile was borne the man divine,
And plac'd aloft; while all, with streaming eyes,
Beheld the flames and rolling smokes arise.
Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy luster streak'd the dewy lawn,
Again the mournful crowds surround the pyre,
And quench with wine the yet remaining fire.
The snowy bones his friends and brothers place
(With tears collected) in a golden vase;

[1] "Gathered forests," i.e., the trees gathered from the forests.

The golden vase in purple palls they roll'd,
Of softest texture, and inwrought with gold.
Last o'er the urn the sacred earth they spread,
And rais'd the tomb, memorial of the dead.
(Strong guards and spies, till all the rites were done,
Watch'd from the rising to the setting sun.)
All Troy then moves to Priam's court again,
A solemn, silent, melancholy train.
Assembled there, from pious toil they rest,
And sadly shar'd the last sepulchral feast.
Such honors Ilion to her hero paid,
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.[1]

[1] "I cannot take my leave of this noble poem," says Cowper, "without expressing how much I am struck with the plain conclusion of it. It is like the exit of a great man out of company, whom he has entertained magnificently,—neither pompous nor familiar; not contemptuous, yet without much ceremony."

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